Rx FOR THE SOUTH BRONX **ROBERT SCHUR**

THE
NATION

JANUARY 21, 1978 *60 cents*

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LETTERS

it's Brzezinski, not Brown

New York City

Alan Wolfe's warning, "The Trilateralist Straddle" [*The Nation*, Dec. 31], on the increasing tilt of Carter administration advisers toward a revival of cold-war policies is certainly timely. Mr. Wolfe named Harold Brown as a leading advocate of the new aggressiveness, but I think that Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's adviser for National Security Affairs, has been even more influential than Brown in fostering the revival of a hard line toward the Soviets.

Since the days when he was the director of the Trilateral Commission, Brzezinski has been a consistent and forceful spokesman for what Wolfe calls "old-fashioned meddling . . . in new-fangled garb." It was Brzezinski who created the Carter administration "human rights" initiative to destabilize and undermine the Soviet bloc. It was also Brzezinski who was instrumental in generating the recent scare campaign about the Cuban presence in Africa. Furthermore, Brzezinski has assiduously worked to reshape U.S. strategic doctrine to reflect his aggressive outlook. . . .

The nature of Brzezinski's supposedly purely advisory position has largely exempted him from either Congressional or public scrutiny. I hope that situation can be remedied before Mr. Wolfe's warnings become a reality.

Jim Khatami

profits of poverty

Camas, Wash.

It seems that Robert McNamara is up to his old tricks, if the editorial "Doing Well by Doing 'Good'" [*The Nation*, Dec. 17] is any indication. After all, even though a military war on the poor in Vietnam was lost, that doesn't mean that fighting poverty with computers and loans to military regimes cannot bring handsome remuneration and media esteem.

As for the European Economic Commission's Roy Jenkins, let it be known that the British Establishment has never been accused of ascetic living—witness the Queen and her family. Too bad this does nothing for the millions of unemployed in Europe.

Frank W. Goheen

Chavez is right

Amherst, Mass.

Michael Yates is correct when he states in "A Union Is Not a 'Movement'" [*The Nation*, Nov. 19] that Cesar Chavez is more concerned with building a "social and political movement than a union." This concern puts Mr. Chavez squarely within one of the important movements in the history of the United States—Populism—a broad action based upon Jeffersonian democracy (the physiocratic tradition) and involving those people oppressed by industrial capitalism. It failed only when it disintegrated into narrow concerns such as certain kinds of trade unionism and agrarianism. Chavez is also in the tradition of those blacks and abolitionists during Reconstruction who worked for a total social and economic reformation before their work dwindled into Booker Washington's compromises with American business. Failure of such acts meant/means that people have less and less control over their own lives.

Chavez is in the unenviable position of directing an oppressed minority trying to keep that control. This may be the reason he does not want his union taken over by Yates's "experts in management, lawyers, personnel officers, researchers," etc. It may be the reason for the seeming authoritarianism Yates notices in Chavez's organization—an authoritarianism reminiscent of the Puritans or the Black Muslims or any group, for that matter, which needs a strong subculture before it can consider integration. Mr. Chavez should be congratulated for his broad understanding of history.

Faythe Turner

EDITORIALS

Indochina Still Burns

Zbigniew Brzezinski could perhaps have used the services of a translator (not the hapless mistranslator his boss the President had in Warsaw) when he said on a TV program the other day that the current fighting between Vietnam and Cambodia was "the first case of a proxy war between China and the Soviet Union." For he must have misspoken when he escalated that border conflict between old adversaries into an arm's-length clash of the two great hostile Communist nations. In any case, he gave no evidence for this sensational assertion, one that will give comfort to certain kinds of cold warrior.

Given Brzezinski's position at the pinnacle of the American intelligence apparatus, we are supposed to believe that he has been skillfully briefed. He might conceal his sources (spies on the ground or in the skies) for the familiar reason that, if he told us more, they might be "compromised." But it seems possible, if not likely, that Carter's National Security Adviser simply didn't know what he was talking about, that he was taking a geopolitical flier for headline purposes, knowing that he would be hard to contradict. Kissinger brilliantly launched that irresponsible tradition.

Lacking its own electronic or human agents, the press and the public must fall back on history and common sense in an effort to figure out the what and the why of the fighting along the Vietnam-Cambodia border. The first fact to note is that the peoples of these two parts of Indochina have been quarreling about the limits of their territories for at least two centuries. The squabbling stopped when first the French and then American hegemony put an end to it—to establish "order," of course. These old tensions were bound to revive once the foreign presences disappeared. The fact that the governments of both countries are "Communist" has almost nothing to do with these predictable events.

It is true that Cambodia is politically closer to China and that Vietnam is closer to the USSR than vice versa, but neither can be called exactly a client of its particular big-power friend. The Khmer Rouge is so prickly that no one can really be its friend, and Vietnam, stoutly supported as it was by Moscow during its long war for liberation, has the sense to know that Peking is strategically much closer than Moscow. There is no evidence at all that Hanoi wants to be Russia's surrogate burr on China's southern flank.

As for China, all signs point to its strong desire for peace in Indochina. For months it is said to have been urging both parties to compose their differences by negotiation, and this makes good sense from Peking's point of view. If a real war of conquest broke out, Vietnam would surely win (its population is about seven times as large, leaving out other military factors) and a newly created Indochinese federated state dominated by an ancient adversary which now leans toward Moscow is the last thing China would want. Laos is already something of a satellite of Hanoi.

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None of these realities, as we believe them to be, stops Brzezinski from playing his macro-geopolitical game of strategic fantasy. He must think it helps to erase the memory of our own dark past out there, giving something like a happy ending to that American misadventure (the Communists are in trouble, so all is well).

It would be a shame if that was the way Americans read the sad events in Indochina that have already cost thousands of lives. It might be healthy to remind ourselves that a mere seven years ago Nixon and Kissinger ousted the dexterously neutral Sihanouk, installed Lon Nol, a puppet cut from the same shabby cloth as our man Thieu in Saigon, and began the "incursion" into Cambodia which destroyed that country and opened the way at last for the fanatical revolutionaries of the Khmer Rouge. To twist the screw of guilt a bit more, let us recall that Nixon gave as the excuse for this stupid and outrageous act the alleged need to protect the dwindling number of U.S. soldiers still fighting in Vietnam (Hanoi having already pledged no military action against American troops if Washington would just give a date for their withdrawal). Finally, two more memories of those bad old days—the killings at Kent State of student protesters at the Cambodian operation and the Senate resolution at last cutting off funds after July 1970 for military operations in Cambodia or Laos.

It is painful indeed to recall this miserable past. And it is galling to connect that past with the sad present on the Vietnam-Cambodian border. But it is healthier to bring these things to mind, and to think of their implications for American policy, than to indulge in the cheery idiocies of Brzezinski's "proxy war."

Reporters and Distorters

The cult of intelligence in this country has burgeoned into a culture all its own. At the recent hearings of the Oversight Subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, the producers and consumers of spying had some rather remarkable things to say. What was most striking was the assumption, blandly expressed by our master spies, that espionage (to use the old-fashioned term rather than the scented modernism, "intelligence,") is and should be inextricably woven into the fabric of this society.

The subcommittee under Les Aspin (D., Wis.) was probing the connections between journalism and the Central Intelligence Agency, a quite proper subject for such an inquiry given the possibilities for corruption inherent in such relationships. The hearings took place after the current CIA chief, Adm. Stansfield Turner, had ordered his minions to stop using journalists as agents. That decision, the result of much agitation within the press establishment over the use and misuse of journalistic "cover" for other purposes, has evidently caused some anguish in the "intelligence community."

Former CIA chief William Colby declared that he had reluctantly accepted Turner's order barring the use of journalists as agents but he bemoaned the "critical erosion of the cover under which American intelligence officers must work." The only substitute he could think of for the off-limits reporters was "official cover"—that

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is, agents should now masquerade as employees of government agencies such as the Peace Corps, the Agency for International Development and the United States Information Agency (which might then be called the U.S. Disinformation Agency or USDA, if that would not confuse it with the Department of Agriculture). Colby wanted a stop put to the expansion of what he called the "charmed circle" of government agencies that are beyond the reach of the spy recruiters.

"Intelligence officers," said Colby, "cannot be effective in hostile areas of the world if they wear the initials CIA on their hatbands." The French have a useful phrase to describe this kind of occupation-centered thinking. They call it "professional deformation" and, in that sense at least, William Colby is certainly deformed. It is revealing, by the way, that Colby spoke of "hatbands" —they are not much in vogue these days, connoting as they do either club colors of a patrician past or grubby reporters of the *Front Page* era with "Press" cards stuck in their hats.

Leaving aside, and shedding no tears for, the recruiting problems of the CIA, we turn for a moment to a more serious problem explored by the Aspin subcommittee. That is the material fed by the CIA to the American press, at home and abroad. Any day's newspapers carry stories on events in the world for which the CIA is the sole source. The dateline is often Washington, and the source is given as something like "U.S. Government officials." They often read like this—"Communist-aided insurgent forces, reinforced by Soviet T-34 tanks, are threatening X, the capital of Y, U.S. Government sources said today." The same kind of story can be planted in the press from abroad. It can be true or it can be false, the only restraint on the CIA in these cases being its need to keep some credibility with the users of its information. (When Colby was out in Vietnam in charge of the infamous "Phoenix" program, credibility was thrown out the window.)

The only real check on this sort of government-sponsored information/disinformation is the skepticism of reporters and editors. It is not enough, in this age of the unattributed leak, to say, as Colby did in regard to Watergate and the value of secret sources, "Nobody knows who Deep Throat is, but we all have benefited from his information." And Americans must continue to challenge the notion, lying back of all these revelations, that our national safety depends on the existence of a gigantic apparatus of espionage.

Return to Sender

The computers under the command of the American Right ("conservative" is the wrong word) do marvels of fund raising. But once in a while those tiny silicon chips slip up and send the likes of us an appeal for money. We have, for instance, been invited to join the Senate Minority Leader's Advisory Council; the price is unspecified but the pledge card suggests sums from $1,000 down to $100.

Sen. Howard H. Baker, who signed this appeal, will not be disappointed at our failure to join his council nor surprised at our intention to use the enclosed stamped envelope for other purposes. We are grateful, nonetheless, for the opportunity to read Senator Baker's arguments for his re-election and his statement of that urgent need.

What Baker told us was that unless he raised $200,000 by the first of the new year, he would have to take off from his Senatorial leadership duties to go out and shake the money trees himself. His letter offers a splendid glimpse at the self-proclaimed virtues of a "conservative" Republican Senator (or is he a "moderate"?). He starts out by boasting that he began the season by helping to cause the withdrawal of the nomination of Theodore Sorensen as CIA director, thus helping to preserve our "national defense." Then he did yeoman service in blocking the Common Situs Picketing Bill ("not in the best interest of a healthy economy").

He claims a share of the credit for stopping the "phony $50 tax rebate" and for winning "a significant battle in the field of energy"—he doesn't identify which skirmish "we won" but declares that the way to go is "deregulation of oil and natural gas" and to "encourage . . . exploration of new wells and oil fields." He needs to be around after 1978, he writes, to help prevent other disasters such as the cancellation of the B-1 bomber and attempts to "weaken voter registration laws" (i.e., make it easier for Americans to vote).

It would be hard to put together a more concise catalogue of political wrongheadedness. No doubt thousands of citizens disagree with us and rallied to Baker's cause. To spare the postmen, however, we would suggest to the computer and its servants that they expunge our name from those whirling tapes.

Reflections on an Assassination

Irene Gendzier

The assassination on January 4 of Said Hammami, London representative of the PLO, will doubtless be interpreted as a sign of the continuing potency of extremism, the increasing divisions among Palestinians, and, thus, another reason to discount the PLO in the current phase of Middle East negotiations. For all the pious expressions of the need to solve the Palestinian problem in order to assure the tranquillity in the Middle East, it is evident that Palestinians in general, and the PLO in particular, continue to be regarded as intransigent obstacles to the achievement of peace.

It is imperative, therefore, to reflect on Said Hammami's assassination in the context of what he represented. His murder was an attempt to disorient the leadership of a movement engaged in a many-sided struggle to implement its goal of national self-determination. Hammami was personally an opponent of violence, but his declared abhorrence of it should not be misinterpreted. He responded to what he referred to

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as the "vexed question of Palestinian 'terrorism,'" by calling it "counter-terrorism," since, in his words, "it is in fact the product of and response to the state of terrorism which Israel has pursued toward the Palestinians since the Zionist state was first established by violence and terror in 1948." The militancy of the Palestinians, Hammami argued, was what finally attracted the world to their plight.

These and a good many other ideas Hammami presented in "A Palestinian Strategy for Peaceful Coexistence," a paper he delivered at the London meeting of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding in March 1975. The address attracted considerable attention in the European and Israeli press. (The text of the talk is reprinted in *Israelis Speak*, cited below.) Hammami's proposal was based on the assumption that a peace settlement should yield the establishment of a Palestinian state. Reiterating the position of the PLO, he upheld its view that Israel must withdraw from the territories occupied in the 1967 war. This was the precondition for establishing a Palestinian state, and such a state was the precondition for opening a dialogue with Israel.

Neither the existence of a Palestinian state, nor that of Israel as a Zionist state, would end Palestinian criticism of the latter's policy of welcoming Jews from all over the world while excluding its original Arab inhabitants. But such continued opposition was not to be interpreted as the permanent sabotaging of peace efforts. The goal of what Hammami referred to as "'a state of partnership' covering the whole area of Israel/Palestine" was to be pursued by "nonviolent and evolutionary means rather than by a continuation of armed struggle." If the creation of a Palestinian state should come to pass, he reflected, then Palestinians "could aim to open and maintain a continuous and developing dialogue with any elements within Israel who were prepared to meet and talk with Palestinians regarding the form of a mutually acceptable coexistence which might in time be developed between two peoples living in the country to which they both lay claim."

It was this call for dialogue that struck a chord in those impatient with the unending prospect of war. David Shaham, former editor of the Israeli Labor Party weekly, *OT*, referred to Hammami's talk as constituting "a turning point in the Mideast dialogue," and "an important contribution to beginning a new dialogue between the moderates." (See "A Dialogue of Moderates" in *New Outlook*, Tel Aviv, Israel, July/August 1975.) And Zvi al Peleg, a Middle Eastern researcher at Tel Aviv University's Shiloah Institute, who vehemently disapproved of Hammami's vision of Zionism, nevertheless urged Israelis to respond to this call. "Israelis would do well to grasp this readiness so that there really will be a dialogue," he wrote. (See "A Dialogue Based on Truth" in *New Outlook*, September 1975.)

Speaking of the day when a Palestinian state had been established, Hammami called for the maintenance of open frontiers between Israel and Palestine, for the encouragement and the "mutual interpenetration of commerce, industry and cultural activities."

The theme of mutuality, of reciprocity, dominated Hammami's address, as did the assumption that a settlement in the Middle East would eventually lead to the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. Yet he did not abandon his hope that from this situation it would be possible "to work out a form of coexistence which will enable the two peoples to live together within a reunited Palestine, while maintaining through cantonal arrangements and a constitutional division of legislative and administrative powers the distinctive character of each."

That Hammami's position might not reflect the majority view in the PLO was immediately seized upon as a reason for not taking it seriously. Yet those Israelis sensitive to the import of Hammami's address pointed out that the PLO did not denounce him or remove him from his post. And, for his part, in discussion at the London seminar where he read his paper, Hammami, according to *SWASIA* (April 18, 1975) showed that he believed his views "represented the majority view among the Palestinians. He noted that the paper had been presented to the political department of the PLO which had agreed, after some modifications had been made, that he should present it at the seminar as his personal view of how Palestinian policy was developing." Hammami continued to speak on the subject, and in June of that year granted an interview to the Dutch newspaper, *Trouw*, in which he re-emphasized his position that "peace can only be achieved when the two principal parties to the conflict, the Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs, come to terms. They can only come to terms by first of all recognizing each other and the other's right to live in peace." (Interview republished in *New Outlook*, October/November 1975.) Amending his earlier statement on the prospect of a reunited Palestine, Hammami conceded that it was an unrealistic goal at the present time. Neither the years of conflict nor the ensuing tension constituted "a good background for the establishment of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence between the two communities." First, he maintained, must be mutual recognition and "the second step should be a Palestinian state and a Jewish state."

This remains a prospect for those committed to the notion that peace in the Middle East must include the Palestinians and the PLO, as the party most directly involved. It is evident from the most recent events that a peace without the Palestinians is as dangerous as no peace, and that it is for the Palestinians themselves to determine who represents them. This position is eloquently stated in some of the exchanges between Israeli experts on the Middle East, collected and published in *Israelis Speak* (1977) by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. But we are confronted at the present time with a series of patronizing references to Palestinian Arabs and coordinated attempts to replace the PLO with a more "manageable" West Bank leadership. In effect, the current momentum is not only for "peace" but for a decision on the Palestinian future to be made outside of and despite the organization that represents it. It is as much a contradiction of what peace is meant to entail as is the continued colonization of occupied territory by Israel, and its continued military collaboration with right-wing elements in southern Lebanon. □

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REBUILDING FROM WITHIN

Prescription for the South Bronx

ROBERT SCHUR

On October 6, 1977, President Carter, accompanied by Patricia Harris, his Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and New York City's lame-duck Mayor Abraham Beame, paid a surprise but not unwelcome visit to the South Bronx. The President saw for himself what looks like the terminal stage of the nation's most deplorable case of inner city decay and abandonment. The news and TV photographers caught the entourage gingerly picking its way through acres of rubble and gazing at burned-out hulks of buildings—the remains of what, little more than a decade ago, had been one of the most densely populated residential areas of any city in America.

Appropriately enough, the President was "sobered" by what he saw. Turning to Ms. Harris, he said that something must be done about it. And then, as in a flash, helicopters wheeling overhead, the cortège of limousines was gone. Silence fell once more upon what was once a throbbing part of a great city.

That, however, is not the predictable end of the matter. Further press dispatches and other reports show that the Carter administration does indeed intend "to do something about" the South Bronx. South Bronxites recall other visits by other officials who were similarly sobered and who made similar "let's do something" remarks, but we may confidently predict that the federal people will stay with the issue—at least for a while. Thus, the President was reported as having promptly asked his Assistant for Intergovernment Affairs, Jack Watson Jr., to "put together a schedule of visits to the South Bronx" by Cabinet-level officers and sub-Cabinet officials. William White of HUD was officially named "coordinator of all federal services to the South Bronx." Mr. Watson is reported to have put some of his own staff on full-time duty to oversee efforts to alleviate conditions in the area. And Secretary Harris is said to have come back from the South Bronx "full of fire" to work with these officials on their plans. "She intends to be very supportive of them," is how one person at HUD described her commitment.

This hasty delegation of responsibilities to high-ranking officials was accompanied by some hints at least of the substantive programs the federal government is being asked to devise. And these hints, it must be admitted, fill one with foreboding as to what is apt to happen. Both in a note Mr. Carter circulated to several aides and Cabinet officials and in remarks attributed to Watson, two points seem to be stressed. First, maximum use is to be made of existing programs; principally, that means the federal block grant for Community Development and the Section 8 Housing Assistance Allowance scheme. Both of these are essentially revenue-sharing devices under which the city has been told how much money it is to receive. The city, in turn, can allocate that money for a variety of purposes very much as it pleases. Second, the city will be expected to achieve "leveraging" in its use of these funds—i.e., it will be expected to induce private sector investment in housing projects by granting various kinds of subsidies and making its own commitments for infrastructural improvements (completing the demolition of the old Third Avenue El, which winds and twists its way through much of the South Bronx, is one example of a public improvement designed to enhance the appearance of the neighborhood and thus its attractiveness to private investors). In effect, the White House is telling New York City that if it focuses its existing resources on fixing up the South Bronx, the President will be mighty pleased.

Of course, there is nothing wrong, on the surface, with New York City's re-evaluating its use of current community development funds (it is to receive slightly more than $150 million of block grant funds this year, and almost $700 million over the next three years, beginning in the fall of 1978). And it is high time that the city concocted some kind of rationally focused housing assistance plan for the use of Section 8 funds, whereby rents for low- and moderate-income families are subsidized, making it possible for them to live in new and rehabilitated housing, as well as in existing housing that is decently maintained.

Indeed, under the 1977 Housing and Community Development Act, an additional federal subsidy may well come to New York City by way of a discretionary "Urban Development Action Grant," for which the city may specially apply. Perhaps the White House and Ms. Harris are hinting that New York should speedily get an application into Washington for a grant earmarked for the South Bronx.

All this is fine, if slightly unspectacular, but the key question is how the city, with federal acquiescence and encouragement, will probably use the money. Will the South Bronx get another round of tired, self-defeating, "rip-off" projects, or will the community of the South Bronx be allowed at least to start rebuilding itself from the inside out, so to speak, in a way that can produce lasting betterment to its remaining residents and can encourage others to return? A suitable warning note was sounded by Father Neil Connolly, Catholic vicar of the South Bronx (who has nineteen years of association with that area), writing on the Op-Ed page of the New York *Daily News* on October 16:

> To be perfectly honest, I got scared a little when I heard that a bundle of money was coming down the tubes from Washington.

Robert Schur, a lawyer practicing in New York, is a former New York City housing official, a consultant to community organizations and the author, with Virginia Sherry, of The Neighborhood Housing Movement *(published by the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers, New York). He is writing a book on community solutions to urban problems.*

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Mr. President, before your plans are made, don't forget to consult with the people of the South Bronx. Don't let the New York Housing Authority and HUD plan from their offices without us. Don't leave us with crumbly dough to be fought over by different community groups in the poverty program. What we need in the South Bronx are policies that will foster tenant involvement, self-invested interest and people's ownership. A plan for a new South Bronx can't come without a plan for bringing jobs, industry, health and social services to our area. Mr. President, we ask for a policy that won't ever again allow the South Bronx to be described as a "haven for unemployed men and stray dogs."

That was an eloquent plea and a timely one; and lest anyone conclude that Father Connolly was indulging in pulpit oratory, we need add only a slight gloss to some of his allusions.

The South Bronx has more than its share of public housing—more than 10,000 dwelling units—all of it assembled in multi-block high- and higher-rise apartment buildings, built to resemble as much as possible a cross between a maximum-security penal institution and a rabbit warren. While well run and reasonably maintained, on the whole, these housing projects have created environments that are almost the precise antitheses of anything that could be called living neighborhoods or communities. As they displaced old, worn-out tenements, they destroyed the social fabric of the former neighborhoods, putting nothing in their place but sterile detention centers for the city's poor, disadvantaged and minority population. One thing the South Bronx doesn't need—indeed can absorb no more of—is this kind of high-rise, high-density, totally impersonal and anti-human housing project.

Yet, only a few months ago, and despite pleas from community residents and organizations that low-rise, low-density housing should replace nearby blocks of gutted and abandoned houses, the New York City Housing Authority obtained the go-ahead to build yet another high-rise public housing monstrosity over the railroad yards in the Morrisania section of the South Bronx. The Authority and the city fathers insisted on proceeding with ten-year-old plans, on the ground that to change them would result in years of delay—which they attributed to HUD processing procedures.

Most of the South Bronx is designated as a Model Cities Neighborhood under a federal law of 1967. In the ten years that this program has existed, it has channeled grants of more than $300 million into the South Bronx. And the decade while this was going on has seen an uninterrupted, ever accelerating decline of the community—a decay that could hardly have been worse if Model Cities had never existed.

Nor has the much-vaunted anti-poverty program avoided the South Bronx. New Yorkers are familiar enough with the notorious Hunts Point Multi-Service Center, with its hundreds-strong staff payroll and multi-million-dollar annual budgets, which has functioned principally as the private political club and personal power base of former City Council member Raymond Velez, a few of whose protégés and cohorts are now under indictment for defrauding the U.S. Government in a building acquisition scheme for a Bronx-based drug-treatment center known as SERA.

Other South Bronx politicians, including at least one state Senator and three members of the Assembly, each receives state supplemental budget appropriations of $200,000 or more with which to establish housing and community development programs in their home districts. Such programs are thus far noticeable by their total absence.

So it goes in the South Bronx. When the politicians don't take the money outright, their friendly real estate developers are ever present to pick up their shares of the action. Besides government-run public housing projects built with government subsidies and loan guarantees under federal Housing Act Section 221(d) (3) and 236 programs, so-called public housing turnkey and state and city Mitchell-Lama programs proliferate in the area. Indeed, it would be an interesting exercise to look into the relationships between these private developers and the local political structure—how, for instance, the campaign chests of the ubiquitous Father Louis Gigante who, when he was a City Council member, shared the South Bronx turf with Raymond Velez, have been liberally added to by contributions from Bronx landlords, builders and real estate developers.

It might also be interesting to find out how one Herman Krauss, long before Carter ran for the Presidency, became the very first recipient in the entire country of a HUD Section 8 subsidy, which enabled him to rehabilitate some 375 units of slum tenements on Aldus Street in the South Bronx; and how Krauss's "co-sponsor" for the project came to be the South East Bronx Community Organization (SEBCO), a group organized and dominated by Father Gigante. Krauss, who prides himself as a tough, no-nonsense low-income housing manager, was virtually run out of the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn by aroused community groups which saw him drive dozens of poor residents from their homes to make way for his city-subsidized housing schemes in that neighborhood.

On the "economic development" side, the South Bronx has fared no better, despite large infusions of public money over the past decade. Exhibit one is the extensive renovation at city expense of the Yankee Stadium—home of the privately owned and operated American League baseball team (and until last year, when it moved to the New Jersey meadows, one of the National Professional Football League teams as well).

Refurbishing the fifty-year-old ball park would cost less than $25 million, the city fathers said in the early 1970s, and would become an anchor for rejuvenating the whole South Bronx. The city also promised to add substantial funds to upgrade the surrounding neighborhood. When finished last year, the stadium's rehabilitation alone had climbed to a figure estimated at between $75 million and $120 million, and not a penny had been committed or even programmed for the promised neighborhood improvements. At such a cost, the rents paid to the city by users of the stadium will never repay the city's capital investment. Local businessmen, merchants and residents say that the benefits of the

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stadium refurbishment are totally unobservable to them. Less well-publicized, but even more scandalous rip-offs have occurred, all in the name of economic development, in the ill-conceived and largely uncompleted development of the city-owned Hunts Point Market and the still nonexistent Mott Haven Industrial Park.

It is against a resurgence of such developments, designed, produced and operated by and for the benefit of the local political-developer establishment, that Father Connolly and many others are arguing. More of this hand-in-glove planning by the existing cabal of the Housing Authority-City Hall-City Planning Commission-real estate industry will, as their previous activities have demonstrated, do nothing except channel more dollars into the pockets of developers and politicians. For the Carter administration to "urge" the city to allocate its present and perhaps forthcoming federal resources and to resurrect the former kinds of public-private sector partnership to redevelop the South Bronx is exactly what the legitimately concerned local community leaders do not want.

What sort of thing *does* the South Bronx need and want? Despite all the fires and abandonments, more than two-thirds of the people who lived in the South Bronx in 1970 are still there today. Perhaps, before writing a prescription for that benighted neighborhood, Mr. Carter and his people should look at what some of these residents have been trying to do on their own. A good place to begin is at one of the two stops the President made on his early October tour.

Peoples Development Corporation, a three-year-old group of mostly Hispanic youths, has just completed the total rehabilitation of what was an abandoned six-story apartment house on Washington Avenue in the Melrose section of the South Bronx. The story of this project, accomplished in the face of early and prolonged indifference and even hostility by the city's housing agency; how its young and inexperienced developer-builders created an innovative financing package, combining public rehabilitation loan funds with grants from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, for a community job training program, and from HUD, for a solar-generated energy system; how they are leveraging this first project to plan the resurgence of the entire neighborhood (having received commitments to manage and rehabilitate a dozen additional apartment houses over the next twelve months); how they have brought together the skills and resources of a half-dozen public and nonprofit private agencies to help them plan, design and rebuild their neighborhood, and how they are passing their experiences on to others by forming coalitions with groups on adjacent blocks—all this in itself merits an article.

Nor is Peoples Development Corporation the only beacon to suggest that the citizens of the South Bronx have not given up on their community. Elsewhere in the area a number of similar grass-roots, community-based groups are stretching their almost always meager resources in struggles to preserve, maintain and upgrade their neighhorboods. Organizations like Bathgate Community Housing Development Corporation, KBA (Kelly Street Block Association), South Bronx Community Housing Corporation, LABOR (League of Autonomous Bronx Organizations) and Neighborhoods Engaged, to name only a few, have proven their abilities to organize tenants, rehabilitate and manage buildings, and plan for the redevelopment of communities with which they are concerned. Many others are waiting in the wings for a chance to show what they can do with just a little fiscal support and technical assistance. Though each has its own agenda and perceptions of what it should be doing, they all have this in common: they are truly nonpolitical and community-rooted, they are free from entanglements with the officeholder and professional poverty agency developer web of alliances that has done so much to strangle the South Bronx, and they have earned a measure of credibility with the residents of their neighborhoods.

Margulies

By their deeds, the people of the South Bronx have written their own prescription; it is here passed on to the President for his consideration:

¶ Ignore, avoid and work around, as much as possible, the city, borough and neighborhood officialdoms. They are far too institutionalized into networks of self-interested individuals and firms who have so excessively milked the South Bronx in the past and who can see it now solely as a source of profits and jobs—for themselves.

Local officialdom has indeed lost no time in unveiling a "Revitalization Plan" for the South Bronx. Flown down to Washington in mid-December, the city fathers' plan calls for a ludicrously inadequate expenditure of $180 million a year for five years (shades of Yankee Stadium!). For this, they propose nothing less than carving up the entire southwesterly quarter of the borough (an area of more than 8 square miles) into a new town. It would have 3,000 unneeded housing units opening upon a "greenbelt," which would extend from existing parks to an area of urban farms (which would have to be created) surrounded by chunks of territory marked off, respectively, for "new construction," "substantial rehabilitation" and "moderate rehabilitation."

A grandiose scheme, but one which would make sense only if the territory involved were either virgin farmland or totally depopulated—which 90 percent of it is not. And of course, this plan carries absolutely no input from any of the people who do in fact live there. This plan

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would undoubtedly earn the plaudits of the likes of Robert Moses; it bids fair to complete the destruction of the heart of the Bronx which Moses so ably began two decades ago when he forced 15,000 families out of their homes to build the monstrous Cross-Bronx Expressway. Significantly, the new plan expressly disclaims any programs to alleviate the problems of unemployment and welfare that plague fully a third of the present residents. Plans like these will also undoubtedly whet the appetites of the developers and building trades unions, but they can only hasten and accelerate the total demise of what is left of a once-proud borough. They should be quietly and quickly filed and forgotten.

¶ Instead, reach out directly to the existing, struggling, legitimate community-based groups. This should consist, in turn, of a threefold process:

(*1*) Meet the people. Let them say what they have done and are in the process of doing. *Don't* tell them about professionally designed plans and programs, ivory-towered standards of what buildings, blocks and neighborhood ought to look like. Let them, for a while at least, do the talking and the showing.

(*2*) Find out what each of them sees that it must do in the next year or two. How would each group reach out from its present sphere of activities, and from the few buildings in which each is now involved, to encompass more of its neighborhood? Again, listen to *their* ideas; don't try to superimpose the visions of experts.

(*3*) Prepare *with* them (not *for* them) plans to locate and assign the resources (people and dollars) needed to accomplish their respective short-term objectives. Nothing grandiose; just, how do you do more of the same positive things you are now doing and what other and related things do you think you ought to do?

¶ When you see these plans, you (along with city-wide groups like the Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, the Association of Neighborhood Housing Developers, the Consumer-Farmer Foundation, and others) should look again at the government programs that are now authorized and available and jointly figure out how they can be used to provide the needed resources. You will be surprised (and delighted) by what is going to come out of such planning and analysis sessions.

You will learn, for example, that hundreds—aggregating thousands—of jobs can be created, immediately, in the rehabilitation, maintenance, repair and management of the buildings that the South Bronx community groups want to assist. You will hear about plans to develop the open space (on which your shoes got scruffed) into parks, playgrounds, ball fields, urban gardens and the like—at minimal cost and employing more community people. You will hear how programs now run (partially, ineffectively and too expensively) by the city, such as the sealing up and demolition of vacant buildings, emergency repair services to buildings lacking heat or hot water and harboring other conditions dangerous to health and/or safety, management and repair of owner-abandoned buildings, emergency shelters for families and individuals forced to flee from unlivable accommodations, can be decentralized and operated by local community groups and made truly accountable to the local residents who depend on the services they provide. You will hear ideas for energy conservation projects, cooperative fuel buying, fire insurance companies, building supply, cabinet making and other community-run companies that can save millions of dollars in operating and maintenance costs for low-income residents and create more hundreds of jobs for local residents. And you will learn from the community groups a number of things you need to do to make existing programs more workable and relevant to the South Bronx—things that may require some fairly simple changes in some of the statutes and administrative regulations and procedures.

¶ If you are thinking about an Urban Development Action Grant for the South Bronx, let it be designed and developed by a partnership of federal housing people, working directly with the South Bronx's own community groups and let it be based on the principle of supporting, aiding and abetting those groups to accomplish their own objectives.

¶ Be skeptical of proposals (by such as the City Planning Commission and the private construction industry) to fill up the empty lots and replace the empty buildings with new housing—low rise or high rise or whatever. It is always less costly to rehabilitate than to build anew; most of the Bronx's vacant buildings are structurally sound and were originally built, and can easily be restored, to acceptable standards of decent, livable, low-cost housing; and if new units are added before the older ones are restored and upgraded, the result will be only more abandonment. There are years of work to be done in fixing up the existing structures and getting people to live in them before we need turn to new construction.

¶ Finally, there is no easy way to bring private business and industry back to the South Bronx—or to anywhere else in New York City for that matter. And even in the South Bronx's flourishing past, though there were more local industries and jobs then than now, most of its wage earners rode the subway to work in factories and offices in Manhattan and other boroughs. Job generation should be promoted within the South Bronx community, by and through the community groups and as part of their programs to regenerate their neighborhoods.

There are many people living in the South Bronx who not only believe that their community can be saved but who are already trying to save it. Join with them in the process. What is there to lose? If federal aid should come in the old packages and via the usual administrative mechanisms, it is bound to fail. Indeed, the South Bronx today is living—or more accurately, dying—proof that it fails, for all the remedies and procedures have been tried there. Contrary to what HUD Secretary Harris is reported to have said on the President's tour, the South Bronx did not begin to fall apart only five years ago, when President Nixon clapped a moratorium on federal housing programs. Its decline began long before that and had been noted with deep alarm by all who cared long before 1972. New York City's own proposed Master Plan—issued in 1969—describes graphically how badly off the South Bronx had by then become.

While no guarantees can be given that the prescrip-

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tion offered here will work—and admittedly it asks for a lot of flexible thinking and commitment by the federal bureaucracy—it ought to be worth at least a couple of years of investment. In that time it just might begin to turn things around in that troubled area. And if it does work, the dividends should be enormous—for not only will the physical environment be improved but people's lives will be changed. □

WHO OWNS THE PHOSPHATES?

POLISARIO WAR IN THE SAHARA

ALEX BEAM

The latest post-colonial misadventure is taking place in the former Spanish Sahara. Ever since Spain flouted the will of the United Nations and the area's inhabitants by allowing Morocco and Mauritania to divide the colony between them in 1975, the Polisario (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguya el Hamra and Rio de Oro) guerrilla front has fought savagely against the occupying armies of the two countries. Polisario's successes in the past few months have set off a chain of events that may lead to big-power intervention in the Sahara: in response to intensified harassment, Morocco's King Hassan II has threatened to invade Algeria to strike at Polisario safe havens there, and Giscard d'Estaing, with an eye toward protecting French investments, dispatched 500 French paratroops to Senegal and Mauritania, and authorized air strikes against the guerrillas. But there is more at stake than liberty and sovereignty over sand; the territory contains some of the richest mineral deposits in northern Africa.

The conflict began to heat up two years ago when Hassan, in November 1975, proposed to invade the Spanish Sahara with 350,000 of his fanaticized subjects rather than permit the colony to exercise its right to self-determination. He backed away from his original promise to lead the "Green March" through the Spanish guns and halted the procession after a 10-mile hike to the first Spanish outpost, but the bluff worked. Prince Juan Carlos, in one of his first official acts as Spain's head of state, similarly abandoned his personal pledge to lead the Spanish defense, and two weeks later delivered up the colony for partition between Morocco and Mauritania.

Even the U.N., which had voted 88 to 0 in favor of self-determination for the territory, approved the Madrid accord, whose signatories so obviously disregarded the will of the local populace. The partition flew in the face of a 1975 report issued by a U.N. study mission which found "an overwhelming consensus among Saharans within the territory in favor of independence" and recommended an orderly transition to nationhood. The land grab also mocked an International Court of Justice opinion, solicited by Morocco and Mauritania, which categorically rejected (by votes of 14 to 2 and 15 to 1) the two countries' "historic claims" in the Western Sahara.

World opinion shed an easy tear for the Spanish Sahara, but its 70,000 inhabitants refused to give in. In an attempt to "consult the will of the people" Hassan summoned the Jema'a, a group of Western Saharan tribal and community leaders, to rubber-stamp the annexation —only to find that seventy-two of the council's 103 members had defected to Polisario. Behind Hassan's back the guerrilla front had been busy expatriating much of the area's nomadic population to refugee camps in neighboring (and sympathetic) Algeria. In those camps Polisario established the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), which claimed sovereignty over the former Spanish Sahara. It also created a system of schools and health facilities for the refugees which has favorably impressed most foreign visitors. And, most important, Polisario has organized a successful guerrilla force that has paralyzed the economic life of the territory and challenged the Moroccan and Mauritanian regimes. To counter the Polisario assaults, both countries have had to rely heavily on military aid from France, Saudi Arabia and the United States.

Why such a fuss over an almost unpopulated region of sand? Partly it is because 10 billion tons of high-grade phosphate rock lie just beneath the dunes around Bu Craa in the portion of the territory usurped by Morocco. There was a time when a ton of ground phosphate (used in fertilizers and detergents the world over) cost no more than a ton of sand, but that was before Morocco took advantage of a slump in world phosphate production to increase the price tenfold to $68 per ton in 1974. The price has now stabilized at $30 a ton, which is still enough to earn $500 million of foreign exchange yearly for debt-laden Morocco. No shipments have left Bu Craa since Polisario cut the conveyor link between the quarries and the port of El Aiun more than a year ago; however, when Morocco's reserves are exhausted the Western Saharan mines will quickly become the country's greatest asset. As one phosphate trader put it, "Pretty soon all the [phosphate] rock in the world is going to be in Morocco."

And although Mauritania's vast iron mines at Zouerate lie outside the bounds of the former colony, the railway line to the Atlantic coast passes through Polisario-controlled areas, and the guerrillas have wreaked havoc with the industry that supplies Mauritania with 80 percent of its foreign exchange. While phosphates and iron ore are the most talked about minerals in the Western Sahara, the area also has exploitable quantities of titanium, vanadium, copper, zinc and, latest reports say, uranium.

No less important is the location of this particular trackless waste. The former Spanish Sahara's Atlantic coastline is critical to Western plans for the defense of

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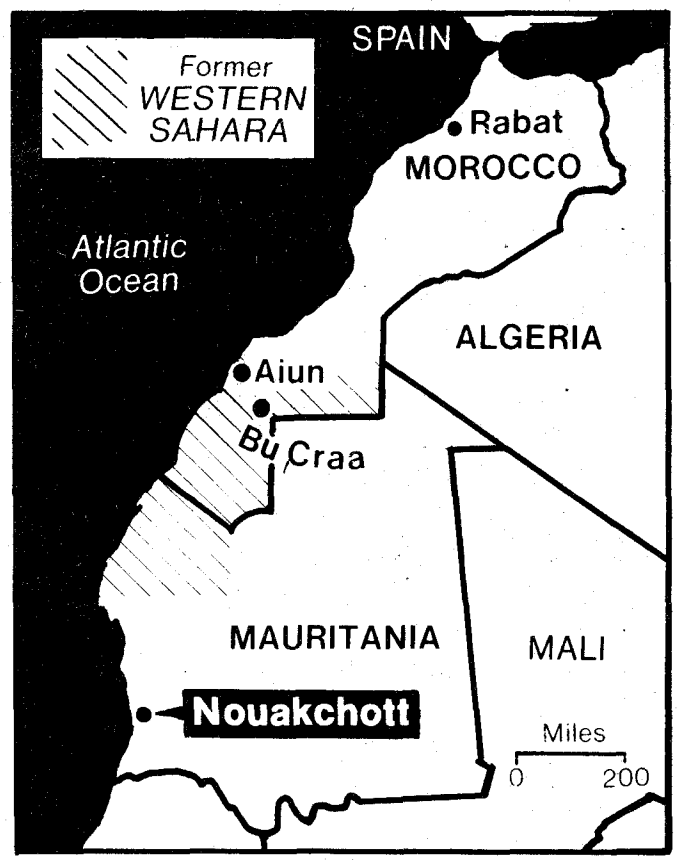
the Mediterranean, and to its African strategy in general. The United States has long-standing "security arrangements" with Spain and Morocco and is hardly eager to have a left-wing Polisario government presiding over the Western Sahara. In addition to America's ideological hesitations in the area itself, the fate of six CIA listening posts in Morocco are involved, along with U.S. use of airport and naval facilities in the Spanish Canary Islands, off the coast of the former colony. Polisario is said to maintain ties to the Canary Island Liberation Front, an anti-colonial guerrilla underground that seeks to evict Spain. No one thought much about the Canaries, whose inhabitants are for the most part fishermen, until Portugal denied the United States the use of the Azores as a refueling stop for the Israeli airlift during the Yom Kippur war; now the Canaries "factor in" to the American "strategic posture" in the area. Last but not least, Algeria has a vested interest in the eventual control of the Saharan territory: in southwestern Algeria lie large deposits of iron ore which could best be exported from an Atlantic port only 300 miles away in the former Spanish colony. Now the ore is shipped across 1,100 miles of desert to Algeria's Mediterranean coast.

Polisario is the key element in the conflict. Through the SADR, Polisario administers a refugee population considerably larger than that of the Spanish Sahara in 1974 (70,000). Polisario eagerly welcomes visitors and nearly all who have taken the desert tour testify to the front's first-class paramilitary organization and complete freedom of movement in the Western Sahara. Traveling in long columns of jeeps and Land Rovers, the guerrillas venture into "enemy territory" for weeks at a time, striking at Moroccan and Mauritanian strongholds and swiftly retreating into the desert. Weapons? "The French and Americans buy weapons for Morocco, and they end up in Polisario hands—remember Vietnam?" That explanation comes from SADR Foreign Minister Ibrahim Hakim in a recent interview in New York. Polisario also dips heavily into Algeria's Soviet arms cache for guns, anti-tank rockets and the like.

Polisario's quest for nationhood occasionally manifests itself in strange ways. On May 1, 1977, during an assault on the iron ore mines at Zouerate, guerrilla troops entered Le Ranch, a bar 2 miles outside the mining town, and abducted six "prisoners of war"—five French technicians and a female secretary. Polisario has never pretended that those abducted were performing any military function, but the front's secretary general told a visiting French journalist, "In the Western Sahara we have only enemies." Among them he included the few hundred French contract employees hired by Moroccan and Mauritanian firms. As a precondition for the release of the French hostages Polisario demanded that Morocco and Mauritania publish lists of Saharan POWs—an act that would acknowledge the sovereignty of the SADR. No lists were published. In a series of fruitless negotiations with Polisario representatives in Algiers, French diplomats pleaded "neutrality," even while their military colleagues were selling Mirages to Morocco.

As if to prove that the raid on Le Ranch was no accident, Polisario abducted two more French citizens in late October, just at the time when the West German commandos were carrying out their Mogadishu "spectacular." The Paris press hit the roof: *Match* featured a studio portrait of the hostages' families holding pictures of their captured relatives under the headline "Polisario Threatens: We'll Capture More Frenchmen." Giscard flew paratroops to Senegal to buttress the French garrison in Mauritania. Polisario's Algiers spokesman announced in early November that a "happy solution" would be found for the eight prisoners, and in mid-December French Communist Party leader G. Marchais announced that the hostages would be set free before the end of the year. (They were, in fact, set free on December 23.) Giscard denied having struck a deal with Polisario; "France has not given in," he announced, and then vowed to guarantee the safety of the remaining French citizens in Mauritania. "France will definitely intervene," Hakim predicted in New York. "She will become involved in yet another colonial adventure, and she will fail. This is the final stage of our struggle."



The New York Times © 1976

In a similar defense of Saharan "sovereignty" Polisario frogmen in high-speed rubber sea launches attacked and sank a Spanish fishing trawler cruising off the coast of the Western Sahara. The three crewmen were ceremoniously imprisoned, but Polisario's explanation of "defending territorial waters" provoked such public incredulity that the fishermen were released and allowed to return to their Canary Island village.

Polisario's critics question not only their interpretation of "sovereignty" but also their "ethnic purity"; at one time the front claimed to represent 700,000 former inhabitants of the Western Sahara, ten times the 1974

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population. Some American officials view Polisario as an inchoate grouping of dissident Francophone Mauritanians and Algerian Saharans, mixed in with a few former Spanish subjects. "Try speaking Spanish to them sometime," one diplomat remarked. Even at the United Nations, which has responded sympathetically to Polisario entreaties, doubts can be heard. "Most members support the concept of self-determination for the Western Sahara," noted one high Secretariat official, "but not all support Polisario. The two are not necessarily the same."

Polisario has placed heavy emphasis on diplomatic and public relations activity abroad, having correctly guessed that an inch gained in Washington and Madrid is worth several miles of Western Sahara. Allegiances in North Africa are complex and changing, and Polisario's successes on the battlefield and in the chanceries are taking effect. Spanish opposition parties are pressing to grant independence to the former colony and rescind the Madrid accord which, besides being illegal, has gained nothing for Spain. The accord left Spain with a 35 percent share in the Bu Craa phosphate works, which Polisario promptly shut down. Morocco recently promised to ship 2 million tons of Western Saharan rock per year to Japan, starting in 1978; the president of the U.S. Phosphate Rock Export Association, taking note of Polisario predominance in the area, remarked that "this deal can be taken with a grain of salt." Polisario has said that, should it regain the Western Sahara, it would invite foreign concessions to operate the phosphate mines. "The Spanish were crazy to take only 35 percent," Hakim pointed out. "With us they could have had much more."

Polisario has also noticed that Morocco is no longer the darling of the West. By turning his American weapons against Polisario, Hassan II has blatantly violated the terms of the Arms Export Control Act, and some skeptics on Capitol Hill wonder if he is really worth his fiscal 1978 $47 million arms grant. In another grisly parallel to Vietnam, the House International Relations Committee heard testimony from a recent visitor to the area that napalm bombs have been dropped on Polisario refugee camps. Morocco's vain attempt to resist the Polisario insurgency has caused the country to increase its defense budget fifteenfold in three years (to $500 million), and this does not include Saudi Arabia's $100 million yearly grant for anti-Polisario activities. Washington has refused to recognize Polisario and the SADR, but it has also never acknowledged the legality of the 1975 partition. So, unfortunately for Hassan, our Western Sahara policy remains to be defined.

The relative eclipse of Morocco's fortunes comes at a time when Polisario's ally, Algeria, is establishing important commercial ties with the West. Houari Boumédienne's quasi-Marxist government is sitting on the world's largest natural gas reserve, and the capitalists are coming to call. The United States is Algeria's principal customer for oil, as well as Algeria being America's primary overseas supplier of natural gas. This relationship is deepening—plans are underway to deliver 1.2 trillion cubic feet of liquefied natural gas to the United States each year, and American companies hold $6 billion worth of contracts in Algeria. A U.S.-Algerian détente would provide Polisario with an important diplomatic opening to the West.

Polisario's military struggle is far from over; the front controls no population centers (El Aiun, the territory's largest city, has 21,000 residents) and has no immediate plans to attack any of them. The public relations effort, however, is far advanced. Polisario's decision to liberate the French hostages attracted banner headlines in France, and most major European and American news magazines have featured "on-scene" reports on life with the romantic desert marauders. Some Spanish parliamentarians are eager to renegotiate the 1975 partition and both France and the United States are forging closer commercial ties with Algeria and reconsidering their military support of Morocco and Mauritania. Thus, the balance of political and economic power in North Africa is shifting subtly to favor Polisario. □

YOU CAN'T HOLD BACK THE DAWN

THE REALITY OF SOLAR POWER

BRUCE L. WELCH

It is no longer resources that limit decisions. It is the decision that makes the resources. That is the fundamental revolutionary change—perhaps the most revolutionary that mankind has ever known. —U Thant

There is no shortage of energy, only a shortage of initiative for making energy accessible in usable form. We are still in a position to choose our future energy sources and, hence, to shape other important characteristics of society that depend upon them. The process of making that choice and the forces that shape it are of major public concern.

Fortunately, ours is a government of contradictions, of checks and balances, so complex that it can harbor, even nurture, the seeds of contradiction to administrative intent. Candidate Carter said there would be no more nuclear power except as a last resort. Yet the thrust of the Department of Energy's emerging program is to speed up the development of nuclear power while doing no more for solar energy—indeed, even less—than was done by the Ford administration.

Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger's attitude toward solar energy was succinctly expressed in a recent CBS television documentary. Asked to justify the accelerated

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development of nuclear fission, he called it a "last resort"; asked whether the energy crisis was not critical enough to justify an all-out effort to develop solar energy, he grinned indulgently: "The crisis is not yet *that* serious." In the same documentary, the President said that important contributions from solar energy are very far away.

Yet, like the truth that will out, superior technologies tend to come to the fore. Quietly, as inexorably as the sun rises, a solar electric age is being born. Acting against the major thrust of administrative policy and the inadequate advice of "prestigious" scientific committees, the Congress is paving the way.

In Congressional committee, the ERDA (Energy Research and Development Administration) Authorization Act for fiscal 1978 was amended to provide $13 million for the purchase of flat-plate solar cell arrays to generate electricity, and $6 million for research and development related to their automated production. Appropriation of these funds seems assured.

In addition, funds for the Department of Defense to buy solar cell systems, staggered over three years commencing in fiscal 1979, were included in both the House ($39 million) and the Senate ($98 million) versions of the National Energy Act. A conference committee on October 27 decided to provide $98 million for this purpose, of which $53 million will be for the purchase of silicon solar cell arrays and the remainder for supporting services and equipment. Congress expects that these purchases will save the Department of Defense $328 million net, in 1975 dollars, over a twenty-five-year period and make solar cell systems competitive in conventional energy markets by 1983. The production of this equipment for the DoD is expected to lower the open market price of the arrays by 1983 to a point where large sustaining markets (e.g. residential power) will develop, possibly at prices as low as $750 per peak kilowatt. Additional purchases from other quarters may well cause even greater price reductions within this period of time.

While the cost of nuclear power has climbed over the past two decades at about twice the general rate of inflation, the cost of generating electricity from sunlight—even uncorrected for inflation—has sharply and consistently declined. In 1955, an assembly of solar cells capable of generating a kilowatt of electric power in full sunlight (a "peak" kilowatt) cost about $600,000. Today, such units can be bought in modest quantities for less than $10,000 per peak kilowatt. These remarkable savings have occurred despite the facts that solar manufacturing plants are not yet automated and that the total U.S. production, while steadily increasing, was only 330 to 350 kilowatts in 1976.

Moreover, a Federal Energy Administration report of July 1977 demonstrated that, if a purchase contract for 152 megawatts of flat-plate silicon solar cell arrays were staggered over three years, a first buy of 32 megawatts in 1978 to be followed by buys of 50 megawatts and 70 megawatts at one-year intervals, the last delivery to be made in fiscal 1983 (purchases customarily call for delivery dates in future years), the total cost of the 152-megawatt purchase would be $240 million, an average of $1,570 per kilowatt; and that the open market price could be driven as low as $500 per kilowatt in constant 1975 dollars for the last solar cells delivered in fiscal 1983. These projections are fully consistent with historical experience for other semi-conductor products. Moreover, they are based upon actual estimates obtained from three leading manufacturers. The FEA circulated these projections widely to industry and government in draft form before releasing its report, and they were judged to be attainable. A market impact analysis released by the BDM Corporation of McLean, Va. last October estimated that such a purchase might drive array prices as low as $440 per peak kilowatt by 1983.

The total cost of installing the 152 megawatts of flat-plate solar cell arrays in the illustrative case, including the solar cell arrays, power conditioning equipment, support structures and storage batteries, would be about $450 million. If, for example, the Department of Defense were to make a purchase of that size, it could replace 20 percent of its gasoline-powered generators with solar cells at a net savings, in 1975 dollars, of $1.5 billion over twenty-five years from reduced operating, maintenance and fuel costs. These are conservative estimates, because purchase costs of gasoline generators and their fuel tanks, installation costs and the expense of training mechanics were not included.

The staggered purchase of the relatively modest quantity of 152 megawatts of peak solar cell electrical generating capacity would justify the capital investment to automate three to five companies in this fledgling industry, and the consequent reduction in the price of solar cells would open vast new markets and thereby drive prices even lower. The FEA has estimated that potential annual markets for public lighting and for driving small electrical motors and water pumps could alone reach 7,900 peak megawatts—an annual market which, incidentally, is about three times the current annual sales of nuclear generating capacity in the United States. Moreover, prices that would tap a 13,000-megawatt per annum market for the on-site solar generation of residential electricity may then be expected to come rapidly into range.

A contract just awarded for solar cells capable of delivering 362 peak kilowatts of electricity to meet all the power needs of Mississippi County Community College in Blytheville, Ark., was signed at a price of $3,026 per peak kilowatt of capacity, about half what informed observers had expected the contract to command. This development suggests that the FEA's estimates of the price-lowering effect of orders more than 420 times that large were greatly understated.

The installation cost, in comparable 1975 dollars, of some nuclear plants now under construction, and which will come on line in the early to mid-1980s, is about $1,000 per kilowatt of electrical generating capacity (later construction will probably cost more). But this figure does not include the first fuel loading of a plant, which will add 15 to 20 percent to capital costs. Nor does it include such extras as design for added resistance to earthquake, flood or aircraft impact; the purchase of more than 3 square miles of land, at a minimum, for

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siting; the cost of power lines and other distributing equipment, operating and maintenance expenses, security, decommissioning, waste storage and disposal; or the cost of government assistance, regulation, subsidy, insurance and emergency services. Moreover, large nuclear plants have been found to operate only about 50 percent of the time at their installed capacity rating, and up to 20 percent of the power that they do generate is lost internally and in transmission.

Solar cells, because of variations in sunlight, have an average capacity of only about 25 percent, and about 30 percent of the power generated is lost if cycled through storage batteries. Yet, solar cells installed on one's own roof to power direct current appliances at a cost of about $500 per peak kilowatt of generating capacity may seem an attractive alternative to nuclear power in some locations, even considering the appreciable added cost of a power storage system. Most authorities anticipate that, in addition to economies from increased production, substantially lower costs will be brought about through technical advances now in sight. This means that within a decade electricity from solar cells could actually become much cheaper than nuclear power for consumers in many areas of the United States. The equation will be affected by the relative lifetime of solar arrays and nuclear plants, a comparison that cannot yet be made because of insufficient experience with either system. However, solar cells should last as long as their encapsulation maintains its integrity to protect them from weather. Compared to nuclear power plants, they are extremely simple devices. For the former, we lack even such important information as the pattern of aging-associated neutron bombardment embrittlement of metal in reactor pressure vessel walls. Claims that large nuclear power plants will have a forty-year life are wholly conjectural; indeed, it has not yet been determined that they can function safely and reliably for a single decade.

A solar electric age is coming no matter what the federal administration does. The government can merely speed or slow its coming. If we wish it to be so, solar cells for generating electricity can become cost-competitive with nuclear fission in widespread applications within little more than half the time that it takes to build a new nuclear power plant. The nation has the realistic option to meet much of its need for further expansion of electrical generating capacity with autonomous solar cell arrays powered by the sun.

For this to happen, large amounts of government money are not required. Indeed, considering the promise that the solar electric age offers for bringing needed diversity and competition into world energy markets, it is regrettable, in a way, that it is to be born of government funds. The absurdity is that government spending is required to offset the inhibitory effects of other government spending. (See Welch: "Nuclear Energy on the Dole," *The Nation*, February 26, 1977.)

Solar cell electricity would have come into widespread use spontaneously, and much sooner, had it not been for the false promise of economic competitiveness given nuclear fission by more than a quarter century of indulgent government support of the nuclear industry, support that continues and is even growing. Solar technologies would develop rapidly if the government would simply withdraw all support from the nuclear industry. The $450 million that the FEA estimated would be required to lower the price of solar cells to $500 per peak kilowatt or less, with a resulting savings of about $1.5 billion to the Department of Defense, is considerably less than one-third the amount provided in the fiscal 1978 budget for continued research, development and demonstration related to nuclear power.

Why, then, does the Carter administration press so obdurately for rapid expansion of nuclear power? Why does it so resist a major solar initiative? One reason is that nuclear interests have pervasive influence among the small "elite" corps of scientists who provide technical advice on such subjects at the top echelon of government. Solar energy interests have almost no voice at all. True, scientists are supposed to be totally objective, to seek persistently and weigh all relevant information. But, sadly, that ideal is not always achieved. All too often the authority and credibility of reports from major scientific study groups or committees, and hence the justification for using them to guide public policy, is assumed from the prestige of the study's sponsors and participants. This is commonly true even when the panel participants are obviously not qualified in, and have not carefully considered, all important areas of science that their advice appears to weigh. The study report, *Nuclear Power, Issues and Choices*, is a case in point.

Its prestigious backing with a $500,000 Ford Foundation grant administered by the Mitre Corporation and its stellar cast of panelists* would guarantee it high visibility under any conditions. The facts that it appeared while President Carter was formulating his energy program and that two members of the study group were given key positions in his new administration could only enhance its chance to influence national policy. A copy of the report was hand-delivered to the new President by his science adviser. On the day that the report was released, the study group was called to the White House to brief the President in person. In the ensuing months, the President's energy program and his acts and comments on energy issues have been in remarkable accord with the recommendations of the Ford-Mitre report. Bias and inadequacies in the structure and conduct of this study are therefore of major consequence and of public interest.

With regard to alternative energy sources, the report acknowledged that, "An assessment of the need for nuclear power should consider potential alternatives that might be economically competitive or might avoid specific serious problems associated with nuclear power and fossil fuels." However, it stated that the "goal" should be to have supplies of energy available at moderate cost when present resources are "gone"; that solar energy in general, and solar cells for generating electricity in particular, will be

*Spurgeon M. Keeney Jr., Chairman; Seymour Abrahamson, Kenneth J. Arrow, Harold Brown, Albert Carnesale, Abram Chayes, Hollis B. Chenery, Paul Doty, Philip J. Farley, Richard L. Garwin, Marvin L. Goldberger, Carl Kaysen, Hans H. Landsberg, Gordon J. MacDonald, Joseph S. Nye, Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky, Howard Raiffa, George W. Rathjens, John C. Sawhill, Thomas C. Schelling and Arthur Upton.

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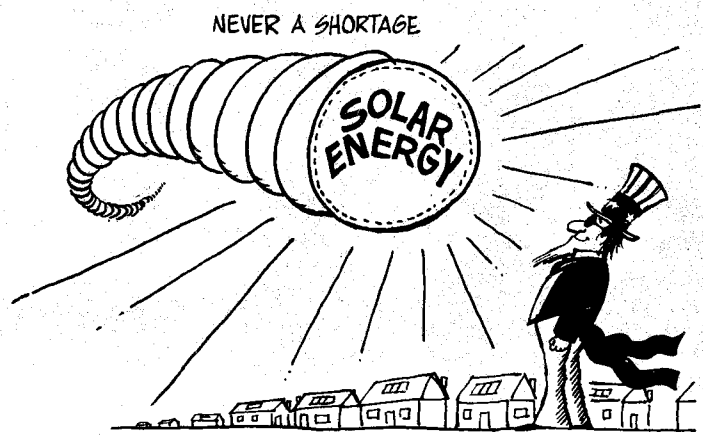
too expensive to compete with coal and nuclear power through the next three decades; that there is "little value in demonstrating clearly noncompetitive technology," and that it would be "inefficient and unnecessarily limiting" to try to make alternative energy sources available "prematurely."

While the panel's remarkable assurance about the appropriate timing for transition to alternative fuels may not be reflected in the President's thinking, there is every indication that its recommendations are reflected in the administrative policy of the new Department of Energy in ways that could cause the deployment of solar energy technologies to be drastically delayed. This is regrettable, because the panel's judgment that the solar technologies could not be competitive are unduly pessimistic and are not based upon a careful analysis of the relevant available information.

To focus upon but one crucial error: in summarily dismissing solar cells, the Ford-Mitre report said that "current collector costs are about $200,000 per kilowatt of peak electrical capacity." In fact, that price—which was not a misprint (I confirmed this with the author of that section of the report)—was almost twenty years out of date. Solar cells cost $200,000 per peak kilowatt in 1959; in September 1976, eight months before the Ford-Mitre report was released, ERDA purchased solar cell arrays for less than 8 percent of the price quoted by the Ford-Mitre study group—$15,500 per peak kilowatt in quantities as small as 130 kilowatts. The price had been $21,000 per peak kilowatt six months earlier, and $31,000 per peak kilowatt in March 1975, which was about the time the Ford-Mitre study group was assembled.



Liederman

Superficiality, inaccuracy and lack of percipience were not confined to the panel's treatment of solar cells; they characterized their comments on other "solar" technologies as well. These deficiencies may be understood in terms of the relative vacuum in which the analysis of solar energy technologies evolved. The sections of the report on solar energy were the primary responsibility of an experimental physicist who for more than twenty years has had active professional interests in nuclear energy; he is currently involved in laser separation techniques for uranium enrichment. He has never been directly involved in any aspect of solar energy research or application, although, in 1975, he was chairman of a National Research Council committee formed to explore the optimal role and organizational characteristics of the then prospective Solar Energy Research Institute. And he is the only member of the Ford-Mitre study panel who had had prior professional experience in any way related to solar energy. The chairman of the panel lists his professional interest in *American Men and Women of Science* as "military and civilian applications of nuclear energy."

The Mitre Corporation, where the Ford-Mitre study was actually conducted, has been a major center of activity for quality research and systems analysis in solar energy technology for more than five years. Yet, the Ford-Mitre study group worked in total isolation from the solar energy experts who were under the same roof. I heard this first from a member of the Mitre solar energy group, and later confirmed it with the author of the solar energy section of the Ford-Mitre report. In our conversation, he justified not seeking and evaluating ideas and information from people in the solar energy field by classifying them collectively as "enthusiast nuts." (The accuracy of this label must be weighed against the historical facts that the price of nuclear power has consistently outstripped the enthusiastic projections of its advocates, whereas the cost of solar energy has consistently declined more rapidly than the relatively conservative predictions of professionals in that field.)

When a prestigious panel makes recommendations on an important public issue, it implies that those recommendations are based upon a thorough and balanced weighing of all relevant information. When that is not the case, and the deficiencies are not clearly stated, their recommendations comprise at best an irresponsible disservice to the scientific community, the government and the public at large.

For years after penicillin was developed it was so expensive that physicians took care to collect urine from the few favored patients who received it so that the penicillin could be recycled. Today, thanks to the economies of a large market and mass production, penicillin is available in every physician's office at an almost trivial price.

Similarly, solar cells will soon be cheap enough to generate electricity in widespread applications. It has been estimated that the basic electrical power requirements of a village of 250 people in Iran could be met by 20 peak kilowatts of solar cells. Such a need can reasonably be expected to be met for about $10,000 within little more than five years. Similar needs exist in innumerable villages throughout the world, and it will soon be possible for such needs to be profitably met.

The rate at which solar cells will actually spread throughout this and other industrialized countries will depend upon the development of adequate low-cost ways to store the electrical energy. It is in the administration's tepid encouragement of new storage technologies that its reluctance to promote solar energy really shows. The budget authority for fiscal 1978 provides only $48.4 million for all aspects of energy storage research, development and demonstration—less than 3 percent of the amount provided for nuclear fission. Almost four times as much

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is being spent by the federal government for research, development and demonstration related to the storage of commercial nuclear waste. Although hydrogen is a strong bet to be the major energy storage medium of the future, the fiscal 1978 budget provides only $6 million toward that goal. It is no exaggeration to say that the Department of Energy has not set up a crash program to find better ways to store electrical power. For nuclear power, storage of electrical energy is not particularly important; for distributed solar systems it is crucial.

The federal government should withdraw its multifarious supports from the nuclear power industry and remove remaining institutional obstacles to the rapid development of distributed solar energy systems. If this were done, electrical power production would gradually return to the private sector, the economy would be stimulated dramatically, and the nation would develop a safer, less wasteful and more resilient electric power base.

Finally, and viewing all areas of the nation's continued welfare, it is imperative that we evolve a more reliable science advisory system. To its credit, the Congress has shown that it knows that the recommendations of "prestigious" scientific committees cannot be taken as gospel. It is increasingly essential, for the shaping of national policy, to have scientific advice that can be relied upon to be comprehensive, competent and unbiased. □

LUNCH WITH MR. SO-AND-CIA

FLUNKING OUT OF THE NETWORK

JAMES HIGGINS

I have made a number of reporting trips to Cuba since 1967, which, in the light of what I am now learning about the connections between some overseas journalists and the CIA, might well have qualified me for an approach by operatives of that enterprising agency. Indeed, it may have happened, although studying the recent three-part series on the subject published by *The New York Times* makes it seem that confusion reigned.

Certain journalists never knew they were being used by the CIA, which nevertheless carried the reporters on the books as "assets." Perhaps I was so listed, but I don't think so. I think I blew my chances when I returned, in early 1968, from my first expedition to what the Cubans, in their upstart fashion, call "the first free territory of the Americas."

That may be open to challenge but it's only fair to say that in those days I, as a citizen of the sweet land of liberty, was not made to feel free about going to Cuba. Being a journalist, the editor of a modest but well-known newspaper, I was, true enough, more free than most people in the country, who by virtue of a stamp in their passports were forbidden to travel to Cuba. Reporters, however, and a few others who could prove they had legitimate business in Cuba—I presume CIA agents had little trouble in offering such proof—were excepted (but in a sort of carte blanche way). It was necessary to apply in person to the Passport Division of the Department of State for a special travel permit, which consisted of another stamp in the passport booklet attesting that the bearer was authorized to make one round trip to Cuba.

It was also necessary at that time to sign what amounted, I guess, to an oath of allegiance to the national interest. (Once I asked my friend Drew Pearson, who was practicing high-level investigative journalism in Washington long before it became a trend, what in hell "national interest" really was. He told me it was whatever those in charge of government at a particular moment said it was. I have not yet found a better working definition of the phrase.)

The oath, as I remember it, pledged me on pain of something or other not to engage in any public discussions, exchanges of views or expressions of opinion while in Cuba. I was allowed to go, in other words, as a professional question-asking and eyes-open reporter but not as a member of a society among whose fundamental principles was that of free speech. I raised this principle with the Passport Division folks but got nowhere. They reminded me of bankers. If I wanted the loan of a trip to Cuba, I had to sign away my principles. Weighing the matter for a minute or two, and swallowing my disgust with them and myself, I signed.

While in Cuba there occurred an episode about which I have written previously for the *Boston Globe* but, since it is germane to the oath and to my behavior on my return, I will summarize it briefly here. A young Algerian journalist and I paid a visit to a new radio station on the Isle of Pines, staffed by a slightly disorganized but highly enthusiastic group of youthful Cubans. The director was 23. I put some questions to him which he must have regarded as implying skepticism about popular participation in the revolution. He then invited me and the Algerian to go on the air and "speak our minds to the people." The Algerian promptly accepted. I, citing my oath, explained that I was not in a position to speak my mind. I'll never forget the look the director gave me. Nor his words. Zeroing in from the side with a glance of courteous amusement he said, "But I thought you came from a free country, Citizen Higgins," thereby, in one sentence, drawing what he considered to be the distinction between the contemporary state of revolution in the United States and in Cuba, let alone France.

When I arrived back in the United States I went di-

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rectly to the Department of State and asked to see someone assigned to Cuban affairs. I was told to return in a few hours for a lunch with Mr. So-and-So. Fine. In a taxi enroute to what turned out to be an excellent restaurant I informed him that I had two purposes in mind: (*1*) to protest against a ridiculous, undemocratic, offensive and embarrassing oath, and (*2*) to provide my government with information about Cuba which, in my opinion, contradicted the hostile policies the government was pursuing toward the Cuban Revolution. (If this sounds naive, as it does to me now, so be it. My intentions, however naive, were exactly as I state them.)

Mr. So-and-So, I must say, appeared concerned with my story about the Isle of Pines encounter and some months later, although I claim no credit for the development, the Passport Division abandoned the oath procedure. My guess is that other complaints may have been received, causing authorities to conclude that, on the whole, the risk of creating the impression that the leading nation of the free world didn't trust its own citizens wasn't worth the paper they had to sign. At any rate, Mr. So-and-So heard me out on the subject of the oath and I assumed, once we had given our orders at the luncheon table, that he would do pretty much the same in regard to my views on the people and atmosphere of Cuba, both of which had exhilarated me. But before I could get started on my spiel he said he would like to ask me a question. "Why not?" I said. "Anything."

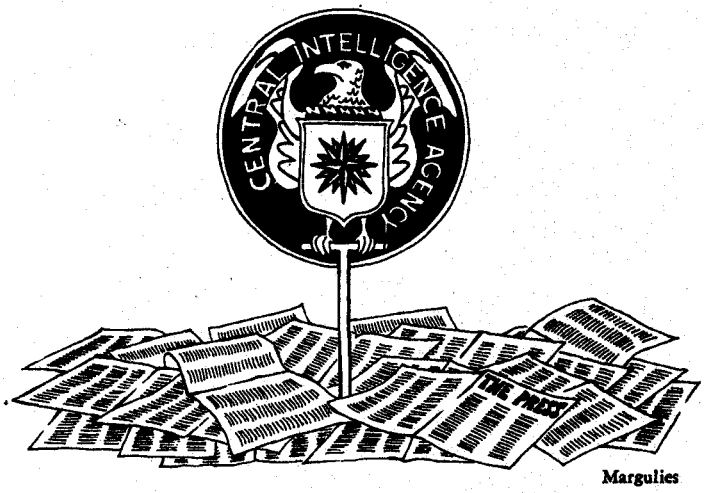
He said he wondered if I had sufficient experience in Cuba to speculate on what might happen there if something happened to happen to Fidel Castro. Yes, I said, I thought I could speculate but I wasn't sure I understood the meaning of "happened to happen." I really didn't understand. This was long before Senator Church's committee had elicited from the CIA testimony on, as I recall, ten or a dozen CIA-sponsored assassination schemes directed at Castro. (The intended victim, by the way, has said that Cuban intelligence discovered over the years a good many more than ten or a dozen. Seventy or eighty was closer to it, according to Castro, whose record for truth telling, even by the standards of politicians, has been, well, let's say better than that of the Central Intelligence Agency.)

Mr. So-and-So spoke softly, slowly, disarmingly. "Happen?" he said. "Oh, the calamities that lie in the path of any of us. Accident. Illness. That kind of thing. People such as myself in the diplomatic theatre . . ." here he smiled engagingly . . . "must entertain this and that scenario, always proposing to ourselves, you see, the question 'What if'? We don't make decisions, simply material for the decision makers. And we try to anticipate. Cuba with Castro. One can figure that, more or less. Cuba without Castro. Who can tell? What's your guess?"

I said I could do more than guess, I could give him some very definite stuff. Without so much as raising an eyebrow or fiddling with a spoon, he appeared to be struck by my assurance. My recollection is that his heretofore indifferent air crystallized into casual but serious attention. "You had opportunity," he said, "to become acquainted with persons high in the echelons of Cuba? So as to characterize them? The cliques, factions and so forth?"

Ah, this was the opening for which, in my innocence, I had been alert, the thinking I wished to correct. I almost blurted out that he must get things straight, that in order to deal coherently with the Cuban Revolution it was essential to grasp the fact that, unlike other revolutionary administrations, significant political cliques or factions did not exist, that solidarity generally prevailed. But I decided, in keeping with my journalistic training, to give him only the conclusions of my first-hand observation. At that stage I had no idea who was who in the ruling circles of Cuba. If Mr. So-and-So had pinned me down, I would have had to admit that I had met Castro just once, at a reception where he shook hands with me and several hundred others, my only distinction being that as he greeted me, sizing up my trimmed white beard, Castro remarked that I put him in mind of "*un pequeño* (a half-pint) Hemingway."

So I told Mr. So-and-So I would try to answer his question about what would happen in Cuba if something happened to happen to Fidel Castro by providing him with my perceptions of the youth of Cuba.



Margulies

"For three weeks," I said, "I traveled here and there around the island. I visited schools, neighborhood centers, homes, industrial shops, encampments, beaches, housing projects, agricultural mobilizations, cabarets, ice cream parlors. I even spent an afternoon playing tennis at a club in Havana with junior members of the Cuban national team. All in all, I must have talked, or come in contact, with 500 or so young Cubans between the ages of 16 and 25. And I am convinced that out of their ranks, supposing Castro had to be replaced, any number of Fidels would emerge, each of them capable, not perfectly but adequately, of carrying on the leadership of their revolution. What I mean to say is that the ideas of the revolution are so firmly planted in the youth that it, the Cuban Revolution, is irreversible. Nobody but a nut, a screwball or a halfwit would tell you any different."

As I write these words, just about ten years after the lunch with Mr. So-and-So, two things occur to me. Number one, by mention of nut, screwball and halfwit I had furnished him with descriptive nomenclature from which he could select that which applied to me. I had spoken with accelerating force and, as I did so, I could

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not help but notice a certain disappointment, mingled with disbelief, in his well-controlled eyes. They seemed to sigh. And also, from a distance, to judge. I remember the same combination in the eyes of the personnel manager of a zipper company whom I was endeavoring to persuade, in the early, desperate, impoverished days of my marriage, to give me a job.

And my number-two thought? It follows on the image of the personnel manager. Perhaps, indeed, Mr. So-and-So was not so much seeking the scant information which could be collected on a first four-week trip to Cuba as testing me for future reliability as an "asset." Yes, there and then, possibly, I had met with an agent or emissary or liaison instrument of the CIA. I hope I'm not doing the chap an injustice. It's just that the passage of time, and the news about journalists hooked wittingly or unwittingly by the CIA tend to generate suspicions. At any rate, I presumably flunked the test. I never saw or heard from Mr. So-and-So again.

A final note. At the conclusion of *The New York Times* series on the CIA and journalists, "a man who held a senior position in the CIA for many years" is quoted as saying that the pendulum will swing and some day "we'll again be recruiting journalists." When that day comes, he added confidently, "I will have no problem recruiting. I see a lot of them, and I know they're ripe for the plucking." Maybe they are, though I trust not. But in any event, those who might be interested in working for the undercover cloak-and-dagger agents of imperialism had better take warning from my experience with the CIA, if that's what it was. Don't tell the So-and-Sos the truth. They don't want it. Tell them what they're disposed to hear, which is, in a nutshell, that they have been divinely ordained to turn back by hook or crook the tides of world revolution, popular sentiment and human aspiration nothwithstanding. □

EMPLOYMENT BY MANDATE

The Promise of Humphrey-Hawkins

DOROTHY R. STEFFENS

President Carter has finally endorsed the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill (S.50/HR.50), but only after compromises which, many liberals contend, left a husk that will do little or nothing to reduce unemployment. Nor do the numerous changes appear to have mollified the bill's opponents. The anticipated anti-labor coalition of business and conservative interests continues to claim that the bill will add to inflation—by some 10 percent per year, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Liberal critics point out that the measure's interim 4 percent unemployment target (to be reached by 1982) would still leave at least 4 million persons out of work. Nor does the bill specify the measures to be taken by the President and Congress to enable the country to reach that goal. It names no money figure for implementation and even permits the President to recommend changes in the 4 percent objective after two years if he believes the economic situation so dictates. In short, they view the legislation as a piece of cloudy rhetoric which gets Carter off the hook with black and labor constituencies and costs him nothing in budgetary commitments.

However, Congressional Black Caucus leaders, including such stalwarts of the fight for jobs as Augustus Hawkins (D., Calif.), the bill's co-sponsor; Parren Mitchell (D., Md.) and John Conyers (D., Mich.) see it differently. When I talked with him recently, John Conyers said wryly: "We don't seem to be able to recognize when we're making history. For the first time the President is mandated by law to reduce unemployment, to set specific goals for the economy and outline the measures which will achieve them. The trouble is, people don't believe liberals can out-bargain the White House, especially if the liberals are black."

Conyers, who has been one of Carter's most persistent gadflies on the issue of unkept promises to the poor and the unemployed, is enthusiastic about the economic planning provisions of the bill. He sees them as basic to an effective attack on the underlying causes of unemployment and its related economic malady, inflation.

Since World War II, the nation's workers have been plagued by unemployment, coupled with persistent inflation. The bill's 4 percent interim target should be seen in the context of an economy where the jobless rate has dropped as low as 4 percent in only seven of the last twenty-seven years, those being the years that coincided with the Korean or Vietnam Wars. In 1975, unemployment rose to 8.5 percent, and the present official (Bureau of Labor Statistics) rate of almost 7 percent is, according to labor economists and black leaders, grossly understated. It does not include discouraged workers (those who no longer squander carfare to report to unemployment offices in fruitless application for nonexistent jobs). Nor does it include the approximately 4.5 million part-time workers who, BLS concedes, would work full-time if such work were available. If these are included in the jobless totals, the true rate is near 13 percent.

The figures for teen-age and black unemployment are even more disturbing. The official rate for all youth is now (November BLS data) 17.1 percent and for black youth it is a staggering 39 percent, up 1.1 percent over the previous month. For all blacks, unemployment is officially 13.8 percent.

Conyers estimates that there are at least 30 percent

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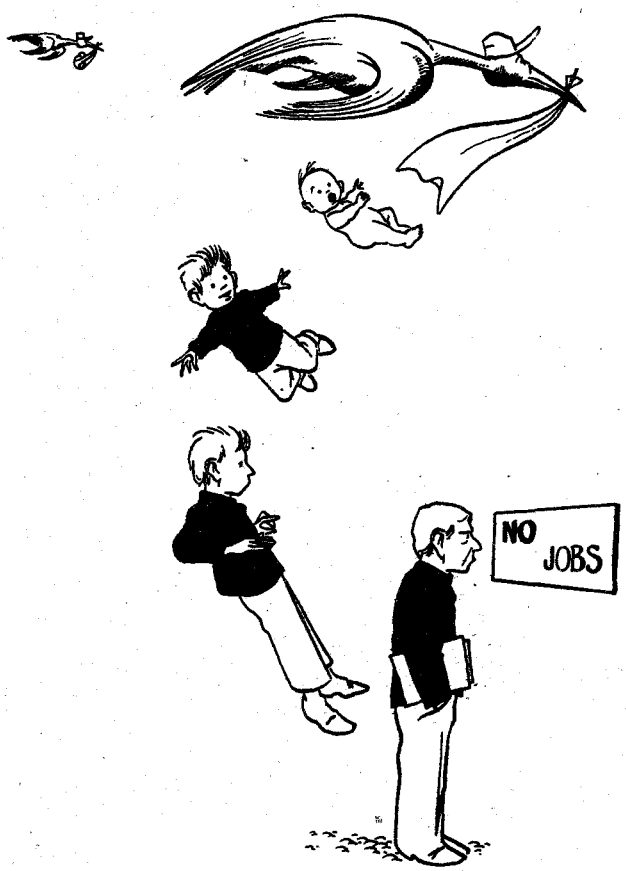
more black unemployed youth than the BLS data show. Among the uncounted are those who have given up looking for work; are working part-time, involuntarily, or are school dropouts who want to work but are still classified as students. He estimates that additional unemployed in the black population would give a true black rate of almost 24 percent.

Congressional supporters point out that, with his endorsement of the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, President Carter has for the first time in the nation's history accepted the principle that planning the economy and dealing with unemployment is a federal government responsibility. Although the Full Employment Act of 1945 was originally conceived as a commitment to a job "to all Americans able to work and willing to work," the concept that every citizen's right to a job should be guaranteed by the government was debated back and forth in Congress for almost a year. What emerged was the Employment Act of 1946, a watered-down version of the



Vadillo, El Sol de Mexico

1945 bill which dropped the word "full" from the title and the concept of government responsibility for action from the text. When that Act finally passed, it called for maximum employment commensurate with stable prices and high productivity, in effect making the right to a job subordinate to price stability and productivity. It dropped the provision for government job programs, made no appropriation, set up no machinery to implement the Act. All that remained of the original "full employment" concept was what Conyers describes as "a declaration of noble purpose." Among the things the Act did do was establish the Council of Economic Advisers and require the President to report on the state of the economy each year.

The Humphrey-Hawkins Bill picks up where the 1946 Act left off. In a series of amendments to the 1946 Act, it spells out certain principles and requires actions. It puts full employment first (before balanced growth); it sets a specific *interim* target (4 %); it makes clear who is responsible for planning (the President); it specifies what he/she must plan for (full employment, stable prices, balanced growth, national priorities); it sets forth the specific responsibilities of the Federal Reserve Board and it specifies what the nation's priorities are.

It does not require a specific appropriation of funds to provide jobs immediately. But, apparently remembering the experience of the 1946 Act, Conyers and Hawkins say that this omission may well help to get the bill through the Congress. Since it contains no money figure, the bill can by-pass the budget committee, one of the shoals on which much progressive legislation has foundered.

In any case, a $4 billion or $10 billion or $20 billion appropriation for immediate jobs, even if it were not cut to ribbons in the Congressional mill, would hardly make a dent in the present unemployment. Existing job programs such as CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973) already distribute more than $8 billion a year to state, county and local governments with little perceptible effect. *The Wall Street Journal* (November 28) estimates that CETA jobs will employ 725,000 persons by the end of 1977, up from 310,000 less than six months ago. But the effect of this in a high unemployment area (for example, Conyers's home district of Detroit, where some 60,000 adults, 40,000 of them black, are without jobs) is negligible. Detroit has received authorization for only 1,500 CETA jobs.

Despite the outpouring of federal dollars for emergency job programs in recent months, the unemployment rate for blacks, and for black teen-agers in particular, continues to rise—up 1 percent for black women in November and 1.1 percent for black youth. If twice as much money were available for immediate, short-term jobs, it would still be inadequate. Even more important, current unemployment relief programs have shown little capacity to attack structural unemployment or provide long-term, meaningful jobs.

The exciting promise of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, say its supporters, is its potential for dealing with basic economic causes and setting new policies. A President would be on notice that he/she must provide leadership by planning and proposing programs and by asking for the money to implement them. Congress is then responsible for passing the legislation and making the appropriations requested. The Federal Reserve, that bastion of fiscal conservatism, is instructed to outline monetary policies that will mesh with those executive and legislative activities.

The reason for the lukewarm support and outright attacks, says Conyers, may well be that many of those

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who supported the original version of the bill have not yet read the revised version. It is worth studying.

Its cornerstone is that it establishes, for the first time, a specific ceiling on how much unemployment this nation is prepared to tolerate. The President is *mandated by law* to prepare programs to cut back the present 7 percent unemployment to 4 percent within five years. Included within that overall goal are the commitments to reduce adult unemployment (20 years and over) to 3 percent and to cut sharply teen-aged joblessness. These are *interim* goals and must be followed by efforts to reach full employment (no person unemployed who wants to work) "as soon as possible."

¶ The President must state explicitly, in each of his/her annual Economic Reports, the numerical goals for employment, unemployment, real income, production and productivity, as well as his/her requests for the programs and appropriations necessary to achieve these goals.

¶ The Federal Reserve is required to tell the Congress, within one month after the Economic Report, how its plans for monetary policy will help achieve the targets set by the President.

¶ The bill *mandates* that the President's proposals for full employment and balanced growth shall be included in main elements of the federal budget and that the budget shall support the stated goals and timetables. The effect of this provision is to reject the economically unsound attempt to balance the budget at the expense of the economy.

With such provisions there is pressure on the President, the Federal Reserve and the Congress to meet the goals or explain why they are unable to satisfy the obligations placed on them by the law. Labor, black and liberal constituencies would still need to press the elected officials to honor goals and performance standards that deal directly with unemployment. "The bill provides the hook," according to one union leader, "but it's up to us to keep it sharpened."

¶ After pointing to unemployment as a *cause* of inflation (in the Findings), the section on ways to cope with inflation specifies that price stability must be achieved *with* full employment. Conyers is particularly pleased with this provision because, "It co-opts the inflation argument from the fiscal conservatives who have used it to justify unemployment." Full employment and stable prices are shown to be not only compatible but mutually reinforcing and equally essential to the nation's economic health. The bill, in fact, contains the strongest anti-inflation program thus far proposed by the President or the Congress.

¶ In Section 6 (National Priority Policies) the President is told that the first Economic Report must deal with national priorities. Liberals, and the nation's mayors, who have been urging a reordering of priorities to put human needs and the needs of cities first and national defense last, should take special note of that provision in the bill. It lists six groups of priorities and puts defense under number five, just before "and other." It *mandates* that these priorities be incorporated in the yearly programs submitted to Congress. Since jobs in the priority areas of human services are more likely to offer permanent, meaningful employment to teen-agers and minority workers than conventional public service or temporary emergency jobs (street sweeping, snow removal, highway labor), this is a significant provision. It makes possible a long-range attack on structural unemployment.

Despite the President's endorsement and support from a number of groups, including the AFL-CIO, Coretta King's Full Employment Action Council, the Congressional Black Caucus, National Urban League and others, the bill faces a battle in the Senate. The debate already taking shape focuses, as would be expected, on the hoary "trade-off" argument that reducing unemployment will increase inflation. Even the "Brookings Institution liberals," to use *Washington Post* analyst Hobart Rowen's phrase, worry that there will be "unacceptable pressures" if unemployment drops below 5 to 5.5 percent. More conservative economists say that anything less than 7 percent is unacceptable. These figures predicate a constant pool of some 7 million to 12 million unemployed workers. It should be noted that each unemployed worker costs taxpayers an average of $18,279 per year in lost taxes and in food stamps, unemployment insurance and other support programs, according to the 1977 Midyear Review of the Economy to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress.

Such figures also ignore the experience of the post-war economy. For the past three decades we have suffered from high unemployment with high inflation and a sagging economy—Stagflation, to use the word coined by the puzzled economists. Far from unemployment and inflation being at opposite ends of the seesaw, the two phenomena have been abetting each other. The Humphrey-Hawkins Bill recognizes this new economic wisdom and attempts to deal with both problems as one aspect of our economic malaise. Section 9 of the bill (Overcoming Inflation) includes provision for strengthening and enforcing antitrust laws and other measures to stabilize prices.

By establishing the major economic factors that affect employment and balanced growth, by placing responsibility on the President, by tying the Federal Reserve into the equation and by stipulating a numerical unemployment goal to be followed by full employment, the bill goes beyond temporary cyclical relief measures and attempts the first integrated economic planning for the United States. It links the major problems of inflation and unemployment, showing that unemployment and inflation are mutually reinforcing and how they cause budget deficits and lack of revenue. For the first time, a bill tries to define national priorities.

It would be indeed splendid if the bill could also offer immediate relief, but its supporters believe that economic planning based on full employment and national priorities is a sound basis for dealing with the nation's problems. The conservative *Business Week* has set the issue in clearest perspective: "Carter's acceptance of Humphrey-Hawkins . . . puts the nation's unemployment problem squarely at the center of economic policymaking for years to come, and that is a victory for the liberal, black and labor forces that have backed the bill since it was first proposed almost two years ago." □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

How to Open a Pigeon

GAUDETE. *By Ted Hughes. Harper & Row. 200 pp. $10.*

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

Book jacket comments from English reviews of *Gaudete* suggest that we are in the presence of "the most powerful and original voice in English poetry today," a poet who uses words "with . . . astonishing verbal thrust and precision" and who "gives a cosmic significance to his poems." Hughes is no mere moralist or inhabitant of "arid areas of abstraction"; his world is "dynamic" and "frightening." Now although it is an arid pastime for a reviewer to hold up blurbs for scorn, these (spliced together from different reviewers) seem to me so inadequate, misguided and untrue that I begin my consideration of *Gaudete* by mentioning them. Does this work reveal dynamic particularity, astonishing verbal precision, and vindicate the claim that Hughes is the most powerful and original voice in English poetry today?

When Ted Hughes's first volume, *The Hawk in the Rain,* was published twenty-one years ago it was admired for going against the grain of the 1950s. In an age of well-made, ironically expert, rhythmically unadventurous verse (so ran the argument) here was a bold fellow who went deep into nature, hawk on fist, apocalyptic horses on the horizon; someone who *really* heard the wind roar or the wren shriek and who was therefore above petty human concerns (or was it that all human concerns were by definition petty?); a young poet at any rate who at age 27 had produced some impressive lyrics. Actually Hughes was, in this book and in the best poems from *Lupercal* which followed three years later, less an "original" or noble savage than sentimentalists would have had him be. It is instructive, for example, to place certain poems from these volumes next to one's favorites from the early volumes of Richard Wilbur (his third, *Things of this World,* was published the same year as Hughes's first) and see how both poets weave highly mannered elaborations around their material. Query: who wrote the following first stanza of a poem called "Acrobats"?

Among ropes and dark heights
Spot-lights sparkle those silver postures:
(The trapeze beginning to swing)
Casually they lean out
Over eyes opened deeper
Than the floored drop. Then fling
Out into nothing, snap, jerk
Fulcrumed without fail
On axes immaterial as
Only geometry would use.

Of course Wilbur usually rhymes, and his lines are more regular; still it would not be absurdly off the mark to suspect he might begin a poem in this way—though in fact it is from Hughes's second book.

Or consider what seems to me a fine poem from *The Hawk in the Rain* which I quote in full the better to compare it with Hughes's latest effort. Here is "The Thought-Fox":

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:
Something else is alive
Beside the clock's loneliness
And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:
Something more near
Though deeper within darkness
Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow,
A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;
Two eyes serve a movement, that now
And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow
Between trees, and warily a lame
Shadow lags by stump and in hollow
Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,
A widening deepening greenness,
Brilliantly, concentratedly,
Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
It enters the dark hole of the head.
The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
The page is printed.

This is distinguished for its movement, for the way it expresses an "entering"—something "Coming about its own business" with concentrated economy and delicacy. The repeated "now" in stanza three is the opposite of gratuitous; it acts out the step-by-step progress into creation which the thought-as-fox is imagined as making. And the poem is both tactful and forceful in its emphasis, while remaining sanely aware of how much to claim for an individual mind intent on using but not despoiling "nature." Although the fox isn't merely a fox, it isn't merely a symbol either; rather the poem is a metaphor as Robert Frost defined metaphor: the impulse basic to all poetry to say one thing in terms of another.

Let me now for immediate contrast put next to "The Thought-Fox" a typical passage from *Gaudete,* one describing the changeling minister, Lumb, who (in the words of Hughes's prefatory argument) "organises the women of his parish into a coven, a love-society" for the purpose of producing a new Messiah. At the time which the poem covers, the parish husbands are about to end Lumb's game. Uneasily driving along in his van, he has an accident and then a vision conveyed in the following language:

One by one he finds them.
The women of his parish are congregated here,
Buried alive
Around the rim of a crater
Under the drumming downpour.

And now he sees
In the bottom of the crater
Something moving.
Something squirming in a well of liquid mud,
Almost getting out
Then sliding back in, with horrible reptile slowness.

And now it lifts a head of mud, a face of mud is watching him.

There is some more sliding and stretching and grasping as Lumb, trying to rescue the "something" finds himself embraced by it:

The rain striking across the mud face washes it.
It is a woman's face,
A face as if sewn together from several faces.
A baboon beauty face,
A crudely stitched patchwork of faces,
But the eyes slide,
Alive and electrical, like liquid liquorice behind the stretched lids.

As throughout the long poem, this speaking voice is toneless, moving from one word to the next by means of "And now" or "It is," and by repeating key words like "mud" or "face" or by beginning lines with the same word—"A

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face . . . A baboon beauty face," etc. It is not clear that there is much to be gained by thinking of the poetry in terms of line units; Hughes breaks them off as he chooses, and the "sense" is never syntactically complex enough so that it makes much difference. Would it matter, for example, whether "Alive and electrical" began the last line or ended the next-to-last?

"His is a dynamic world and a frightening one": one sees why such adjectives should be hauled out, since brought up against a toneless, drugged, repetitive insistence on the unspeakable (what *is* that "something" squirming down there?) only scary but "vital" adjectives will do. The voice imagined to speak "The Thought-Fox" seemed to issue from a living person, interested in variations of tone, sometimes confiding in us ("Through the window I see no star"), at other times more concerned with setting the thing before us ("Brilliantly, concentratedly/Coming about its own business"). By contrast, the voice which speaks throughout *Gaudete* is barely a human voice at all. Call it "cosmic" instead—if you like the word, and some do—for it moves almost entirely by deadpan declaratives strung together with the most basic of connectives: "And," "But," "Then." This cosmic, impersonal voice is also curiously subject to purely verbal effects, almost stuttering in its wide-eyed confrontation with deep things. "Something moving" in one line will suggest "Something squirming" in the next; or the voice will be led from one word to similar sounding ones—"Something . . . squirming . . . sliding . . . slowness . . . striking." Usually it finds alliteration irresistible; so "baboon beauty" and "liquid liquorice" don't so much point to anything out there in the object (which is but a verbal nightmare anyway) but spawn one another and harken after Edith Sitwellian vowel effects—"liquid liquorice . . . stitched lids." Hughes even cultivates these effects by playing around with his protagonist's name: "Lumb's mouth lumps with movement./ Sounds lump in his squeezed throat./ His lungs struggle. . . ."; "His lips loll idiot loose. His mask/Is loosened. . . ."

I believe the style of *Gaudete* represents a corrupt or vicious use of language, sensational and self-regarding in its effects. Its impersonality is of a superficial kind, since there is never revealed in the poem any human personality to transform or escape from into art. There is only the dogged language-user, the impartial observer with no subjective preferences, no morality, moving words around like lumps of matter, or running from one sound to the next like liquid liquorice. To this charge the reply might be made that Hughes is not writing "personal" lyrics, as he sometimes did in his early volumes; that *Gaudete* (billed as a "major work") is a long poem, a folktale-narrative the telling of which must be naive and deeply resonant, untempted by the pleasure and responsibilities of a sophisticated consciousness and a social tone.

Considering what we get in place of a narrator with a human perspective on the dreadful events (I presume they can be called that) narrated, the trade-off seems a dubious one. Here the reader must decide whether this reviewer is merely timid and prudish, or whether there is something less than satisfactory about sitting in a comfortable chair and reading passages like the following:

Maud, in her bare room below, has wrenched the pigeon's head off.
Her blood-smeared fingers are fluffed with white down.
Now her hooking thumbs break the bird open, like a tightly-taped parcel.
Its wing-panics spin downy feathers over the dusty boards.
She is muttering something.

(Humming *These Foolish Things* perhaps?) These ministrations are performed by Lumb's housekeeper Maud, here entertaining herself with the bird preparatory to getting painted up for the big orgy at the church basement. Once again the "something" sounds very dark and exciting; and in a sense this passage is expert—what a *good* way to describe how to open a pigeon! Having already unbuttoned his shirt, removed his necktie and laced up his boots (he's already had to wade through a lot of mud) our thrilled reader is presumably not about to ask whether the activity he and the poet are engaged in is morally and humanly defensible. Isn't life a violent and shocking affair? Isn't the poet allowed to do anything with words?

Maybe not with impunity. Hughes's humorless insistence on how awful things are ("bleak pessimism" would no doubt be the word for it) is probably real enough; he is, in Wyndham Lewis's phrase, an authentic "bad-timer." But *Gaudete* overkills. It's hard to get up a real shiver for that poor pigeon when already (or was it a dream?) "a long-handled hook rips the bull's underbelly from ribs to testicles./ Half a ton of guts/ Balloon out and drop on to Lumb"; or a mauled dove's head "Dangles like a fob,/Squandering its ruby unstoppably/Into the sterile gravel"; or a hunter's knife stabs a swimming stag in the nape "and a whelm of spray and limbs" erupts; or (best of all) a bull's horns are sawed off with a wire. After a while, one says, I can handle anything. There is also, to assure us we're in the realm of Art, Leonard Baskin's inevitable drawing of slimy things gaudily decorating *Gaudete*'s cover; the kind of book that might show up on a coffee table and doesn't necessarily have to be read. There is also a good deal of hot-sex stuff ("Inside Felicity, a solid stone-hard core of honey-burning sweetness has begun to melt/And she knows this is oozing out all over her body/And wetting her cheeks and trickling on her things") to mix in with the blood and the guts. It is as if Terry Southern had not written *Candy*. And suddenly one simply can't resist the thought that Ted Hughes has gotten on to a good thing; that early along somebody praised him for his dark brooding intensity and he has ended up sounding like the Truman Capote of Yorkshire.

In his British Council pamphlet on the poet, Keith Sagar praises Hughes's bravery; "He has left behind the little humanist critics who are afraid of getting their feet wet. Querulously they call to him to come back to the familiar shore, back to the secure humanistic 'reality' in which they have invested their values." Since I'm less than "secure" about the reality I've invested my values in, I'm not calling out for Hughes to come back

THE GOAL

Not to be, mean
much to anyone
like man who lived
with your own name
a hundred years ago
and find a place
uncluttered
where you might wake
in an empty room
and get to know
the light
not just as it knows
junk of our lives
we value, worry
over
but as itself,
a friendly feeling
tempting you again
to be, and mean
to someone
perhaps merely
some thing, but not
to those who break
you for your love.

David Ray

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to it, though I lament the direction his talent has taken. But as a literary critic, even a little humanist one, I must point out the price language is paying for his indulgence in wild and whirling words. Early in *Gaudete,* within the span of 8 pages, the following phrases can be found: "as if to remain still were even more futile"; "As if those puzzles held something from her"; "As if she breathed inside the silk of his nearness"; "As if it had crashed in through the window"; "As if he had just failed to save it"; "as if it were all something behind the nearly unbreakable screen glass of a television"; "As if under the intensification of joy"; "as if clearing an aim"; "As if tearing free"; "As if his/rabbiting spade had spilled open a cache of ancient gold"; "As if hours had passed"; "As if in a doctor's waiting room." Frost once ended a tribute to E.A. Robinson by celebrating the metaphorical nature of all poetry: "All virtue in 'As if'." Hughes's frantic efforts to invest his tale with the truth of poetry results in "as if" run amok. Since everything is as if it were something else, nothing really turns out to be anything in particular. It's all words, the more (and there is always more) the merrier, and the bloodier. In the process something gets betrayed; "English," as Keats said it must be, has not been kept up. We should not rejoice at the publication of *Gaudete.* □

Whatever Is a Going Thing

THE SELECTED POEMS. *By A.R. Ammons. W.W. Norton and Co. 109 pp. $7.95.*

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

I had better begin by admitting that *The Selected Poems* was the first of A.R. Ammons's books to have come my way. Because the pleasure and excitement of reading it aroused my curiosity about Ammons's other work—and there was no indication in the book of sources or chronology, nothing that would have helped an uninitiated reader to get an idea of how the selection relates to the totality of this poet's published work—I felt the need to do some homework and complement my reading of *The Selected Poems* with the *Collected Poems 1951-1971* and Ammons's most recent collection, *The Snow Poems.* As far as I can make out from advertisements on the dust covers, even their aggregate of nearly 700 pages doesn't amount to the whole of Ammons's poetic works to date. Yet the sheer bulk and range of their contents demanded more time for digestion than a reviewer can decently take. The effect of yielding to my curiosity was to send me back to *The Selected Poems,* with some misgivings about the later work and the conviction that a selection was not only desirable but necessary, and not only as a concession to readers who are lukewarm, lazy, or as ignorant as I had been of this poet's work.

If Ammons began with apprentice work, as most poets do, there is no trace of it in *The Selected Poems* (any more than in the *Collected Poems*). The earliest poems included are wholly achieved and wholly characteristic in that they are poems in which a human consciousness confronts natural phenomena as much to differentiate and separate itself from nature as to merge in it. One recurrent natural force in the early poems is the wind that induces a sense of "man's redundancy" in "a great blank unwasting silence." The energy and self-sufficiency of nature are celebrated by discoveries of them in hidden or unexpected places, as in the microcosm of insect life ("Bees Stopped") or the "dampened grain of sand" ("Expressions of Sea Level"). In the early poems, more than in the later ones, this exploration of nature is complemented by a preoccupation with history and myth.

From the start, too, Ammons's diction was equal to the great scope of his concerns, ranging from lyrical evocativeness to scientific precision, from ecstatic praise to an argumentative reflectiveness. The very strong tensions in those early poems could be released as wit or humor, as in "The Wide Land." There were no facile fusions or pantheistic communions:

no use to make any philosophies here:
I see no
god in the holly, hear no song from
the snowbroken weeds. Hegel is not
the winter
yellow in the pines: the sunlight has
never
heard of trees . . .

As a "nature poet," whatever that may be, Ammons has always specialized in winter. That in itself is a very considerable distinction. The rhythmic structure of Ammons's poems points to an American tradition going back to Pound and Williams, if not to Whitman. However "free" the verse may look, in his best poems it is rhythmically taut, and this tautness corresponds organically to the thematic tensions.

The danger of looseness in some of the later poems has a more than merely formal basis. There is a forewarning of it in the poem "Mechanism" and its sweeping affirmation of whatever is "a going thing":

goldfinch, corporation, tree,
morality: any working order,
animate or inanimate

all of which the poet exhorts himself to "honor." Before that poem can close with a celebration of the goldfinch it has to grapple with the vocabulary of biochemistry; but nothing more is said of the "corporations" or of how their particular sort of efficiency might conflict with that of other orders, other "going things," other moralities. The shade of Whitman, which becomes obtrusive in later poems like "One: Many," has a great deal to answer for in American poetry. The promiscuously affirming gesture inherited from Whitman is stretched to its limits in Ammons's poem "Still," in which the beggar with stumps for legs is found not to be "lowly," because "love shook his body like a devastation"; while in the related poem "One: Many" "the small-business/man in/Kansas City declares an extra dividend." Both are accommodated in the poems, and presumably honored, as "going things." Ammons's poems are sparest and tautest where they concentrate on one thing at a time, keeping clear of the many. They are endangered by Ammons's determination to assimilate the "unassimilable fact" ("The Misfit") into an order that becomes increasingly self-centered. In the later poems multiple awareness even leads Ammons to print poems in double columns—a dubious benefit to the reader, who cannot take in the two columns simultaneously and is forced to divide his attention.

Yet Ammons's senses retain their keenness and sharpness throughout his work, given their chance. Nothing can go wrong where Ammons conveys their beautifully exact perceptions. In this I see the strength of his work, that, to him, "tomorrow's new walk is a new walk," that for him "there is no finality of vision," no closed system of signs or forms. At his best he can write poems of pure perception, like "Center" or "Winter Scene," that sing without the help of meter or rhyme, because every-

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thing inessential has been eliminated, including the poet's argumentative proclivities. Where things go wrong for me it is over Ammons's deductions from what he perceives, even the claim, in the poem just quoted, "Corsons Inlet":

I make
no form of
formlessness.

All poetry is a forming and shaping; and the less a poet leans on ready-made forms and conventions, the greater his need to avoid sprawl and garrulity. This has to do with subordinating poetic process to the matter of poetry, as Ammons has done with admirable succinctness even in a poem about that very act, "Poetics":

. . . Not so much looking for the shape
as being available
to any shape that may be
summoning itself
through me
from the self not mine but ours.

In much of the later poetry this "self not mine but ours" is only sporadically able to get through. That the dominant tone in *The Snow Poems* is sardonic, wry or cynical does not detract from them; but there is a loss of sharp focus and a tendency to indulge in not always witty wordplay, more ruminative than reflective. Ammons seems acutely aware of the change, and perhaps too much aware of every sort of change in himself, beginning with changes due to aging. One of these changes, in his relationship to natural phenomena, is eloquently rendered in the poem "For Harold Bloom":

I do not speak to the wind now:
for having been brought this far by
nature I have been
brought out of nature
and nothing here shows me the image
of myself.

And why should it, I find myself arguing back to that. It never did, as you've said yourself. What nature showed you was its own images, and you picked them up.

A.R. Ammons has every right to his changes, every right to register them as truthfully as he can. What I can't accept is the assumption underlying many of his later poems that anything is better than nothing, anything is grist to the poetic mill, as long as it goes on turning. I begin to suspect that for Ammons poetry itself has become one of those "going things" which he "honors" only because they go. One monstrous specimen of this kind of compulsive productivity is his long poem "Hibernaculum," with its 112 sections of nine lines each and no full stop before the last line, its running commentary on its own workings and its bulletins about the operator's state of mind. In it, one thing leads to another, and the mill keeps turning, without any good reason why it should ever stop. That poem exhausted me long before it had exhausted the poet, because the dynamo that propels such mills is a different self, a different ego, from the one that transmitted a "self not mine but ours" in poems of pure perception.

Since "Hibernaculum" is not included in *The Selected Poems* it was impertinent of me to quarrel with it here; but by forfeiting my ignorance of Ammons's other work I got entangled in a web of conflicts and arguments almost as intricate as Ammons's own with himself. If I liked his best work less, and were less conscious of how many of the best American poets have been going to pieces in middle age, under the pressure of what passes for success, I should have been more polite; and I wholeheartedly recommend *The Selected Poems* to anyone who has missed, or been put off by, the larger collections. □

The Happy Ending

EMILE CAPOUYA

This is Part III of an essay, the first sections of which appeared in *The Nation* of October 1 and 22.

For this my son was dead, and is
alive again;
he was lost, and is found.
—St. Luke 15:24

Thus far we have been dilating on M.L. Rosenthal's faults—that to a reasonable man might seem not faults but simply characteristics—discussing the poet in the light of a crabbed idea of poetry, and in general proposing a standard of aesthetic judgment more Procrustean than commodious, which he is to be made to fit willy-nilly. I would argue, of course, that such a standard would have art express some seemly conformity with our values, if we should be lucky enough to arrive at any again. But there would be little point in beating an artist about the head and shoulders for sometimes disappointing our hope if that hope were founded on nothing more substantial than our need. You need a great poet? What else is new?

The embarrassment is that in Rosenthal we have a great poet, while his demeanor sometimes sorts oddly with the purple. Let me be plain. I mean great in the sense of the word that by custom we reserve for the mighty dead. A great poet is a man who has written great poems. Rosenthal has done that; it can be demonstrated—by nothing more elaborate than ample quotation; and if the tide serve, as I judge it does now, he is even now setting out upon a passage that will show him becoming ever more himself, dedicating himself with an athletic will to our service.

A poet belongs of right to his audience, is answerable to it. The audience has responsibilities to its poet. Among these are to love him for the good he does, be jealous of his honor and dignity, and, occasion offering, point out to him his duty. Henry James Sr., in his touching theology, suggested that God might need our collaboration, and not merely so that the divine plan might be accomplished. James's uncanonical contribution—scrupulous and tenderhearted as befits the man who could not accept a heaven that rejected any soul—was that God needed our help in order to become, as it were, more fully God. We were His limiting condition. To descend again to literature, Whitman declared that to have great poets we must have great audiences. Both these ideas are at bottom orthodox. They are also common sense. It seems to me that Rosenthal has for years been beating to windward against a foul tide—us. Despite us he has made headway, and it is time that we granted him good wind and good water. I think it likely that, before many more years have passed, the claim that he is a great poet will be assumed as the basis of discourse. It is not as his herald, then, that I have set down these remarks, but as a prospective member of his fit audience. He has awakened expectations in us. We hang upon his words.

The ground of our dissatisfaction with him can be reduced to this: the oracle does not apologize. To do so is to speak for himself and not for the god that stirs him. That leads the oracle necessarily to speak of himself, to himself, at last—and we are not interested in him or in overhearing him. We are interested only in his gift. Now, when Rosenthal finds his proper theme, which is passion, he is moved to passionate utterance. Then he forgets himself, then he

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expends himself, then the self is subsumed in the poet, and he speaks to us.

I mean to dismember a notable poem of his, a poem of passion, in order to talk about it conveniently. I do it that violence because I know that its scattered members will come together again with an Orphic virtue, and the poem's integrity will turn discussion into demonstration.

That poem is "To His Other Spirit," the first of a sequence called "His Present Discontents," from the collection, *The View from the Peacock's Tail* (1972). In it he addresses his son. It carries an epigraph from César Vallejo: "There comes over me some days a feeling abundant, political . . .," itself the first line of a poem in which Vallejo declares his purpose of immersing himself with a generous passion in the destructive element, sounding the depths of the questionable, even of the abominable —a program, in the modern manner, indistinguishably Faustian and self-indulgent, for which he makes in the concluding lines the strongest, most attractive possible case: "and to have been in everything/ straight with myself." Rosenthal cites the line because he approves, at least in part, of the program. Indeed, in other poems of his he pursues just that program. Rosenthal's epigraph, which is with a small change Clayton Eshleman's rendering of the line, is not quite accurate to the tonality of the Spanish original—understandably, since the languages of men are not translations of one another: *Me viene, hay días, una gana ubérrima, política. . . .*

To suggest that tonality in English we have to abandon the goal of metrical fitness: "Sometimes I have an impulse, a desire, richly fruitful, political." A feature of that impulse, that desire, is, as we learn further on in the poem, "to help the killer kill—terrible thought. . . ." Not passive "feeling" but volition is meant here. The paradox is that this view of experience, deliberately sought, is the theme from which "To His Other Spirit" dissents, the death from which the other spirit and the poet's own are resurrected. In some other poems, as I have suggested, Rosenthal himself seeks, not the grail but those limbecks whose distillations Shakespeare alludes to in the Sonnets. Here he relents from the religion of experience, from the Faustian impulse—while his epigraph acclaims it.

To His Other Spirit

"There comes over me some days a feeling, abundant, political. . . ."
(Vallejo)

I know you so well, not at all, beloved
apple of my bough, heart's-thorn, wise little spirit
who will outlive me, and my fear for you, and yours
for me in the world's wide room where through all my weathers
I move, walk, ride, dream in my pants like Einstein's or
Lenin's, full of the latest wrinkles at seat or knee,
posh as somebody's grandpa darkening on an old daguerreotype.

The verse is a tissue of antitheses: so well, not at all; beloved apple of my bough, heart's-thorn; the world's wide room, my pants. And that item of motley, the greatest spirit, Einstein or Lenin, travesties himself in, and no doubt is equally naked under his clothes. Those clothes are time's creature, showing the effects of use and the impress of the mode, and at some little distance in time also show the wearer to have been at least faintly ridiculous. To the son he is addressing, the poet is already that far removed in time, and, seeing himself in the boy's eyes, he accepts that view of himself—with the reservation that he is nevertheless the man who will utter the poem's triumphant cadenza. The poet is warming to his work. The first scene of the drama, where the convention demands that the awkward job of presenting the characters and the forces acting upon them be got over as gracefully as possible, has been safely concluded—all the objective "business" got through with the subjectivity of the swift hesitations and doublings-back; with the music of the language, part demotic, part pastoral; with the note of mortality sounded twice, at full gallop. How perfectly impersonal is the "I" of "I know you so well," and by contrast how obtrusive is the, after all, dim view given of the speaker, at least twice reflected, and softened at each remove from the original, in "posh as somebody's grandpa. . . ." The reader accepted it so that the poem might unfold, granting the poet his opening gambit for the sake of something more interesting to both than reader or writer. But it was a near thing. It is clear that it is not the grammar that tells us when the artist is more concerned with himself than with his subject, but the tone.

"We are transmitters," Lawrence said, but you will rise
on an arc of your own nature, beautiful beyond even yourself—
who knows what it will be like then? Does not every life,
every painting, poem dance out the grief of beauty and joy?
"There comes over me some days a feeling, abundant, political," when

I think of you
(floating forever, as you know, in my own amniotic soul
where something of you took form, mother to myself as well) . . .

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stormy, volatile, tentative as all living
thought. But you have been born
and will be again, airy creature—myself,
and far from me.

Antithesis again. We live by tradition, but out of tradition novelty fatally comes, marked with the peculiar character of each new generation. Each generation outdoes itself in the beauty of its works—and suddenly in mid-sentence the heart-breaking Chekhovian cry, "Who knows what it will be like then?" Chekhov and the audience know: men will have grown more glorious and more base, there will be more sympathy and more sorrow. The poem knows it, too. The theme of every life, every art is "the grief of beauty and joy." At that point the poem echoes Vallejo again, and the exuberant "feeling"—which is by no means divorced from life but "political," may even hope to suffuse the whole range of our public actions with its color and timbre—has to be understood now as tinged with the pain of mortality. The lines are driven forward by halts and contradictions, gaining rather than losing power in a long parenthesis—which is closely punctuated, includes a parenthetical note, is slowed by the reverberations of a complex and touching conceit, then further slowed by suspension points—to conclude with the ejaculatory "stormy, volatile, tentative as all living thought," where the powerful rhetoric disguises the abstract character of the idea. And the entire stanza has been growing toward the prophecy of the last two lines that speak of rebirth and point to death. The tone here is Keats: "Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird," and "Fled is that music. Do I wake or sleep?" It is impossible not to remark that the lines are noble English, worthy of their great originals, and as piercing as they:

But you have been born
and will be again, airy creature—myself,
and far from me.

On a bed, shooting up with your hepa-
titopoeic needles,
"fuck" and "shit" on the tip of your
tongue's pride, music
of wrathful vileness, time dripping away
from the crusted corners of your
seraph's-eyes while
the retch-stale air of your closed-
chamber dreams
sucks in the drowsy host of sullen flies,
friends
settling in, companionable death-row
prison-mates,
and the invisible sun and stars and
moon
swing overhead singing death's im-
mortal sway—

What a shock. The furniture of the scene: the bed on which one reclines, but not at ease; the needles, indispensable instruments of the Passion, "hepatitopoeic" at that, productive of hepatitis, an invention on the model of "onomatopoeic" and "hypnopoeic"—the promised expansion of consciousness reduced to its lowest terms; music transmitted electronically to the passive and insatiate listeners, "music of wrathful vileness"; and thereafter the sickened rhetoric hatches compound words—"seraph's-eyes," "retch-stale air," "closed-chamber dreams," "death-row prison-mates," while the heavenly bodies, shining elsewhere, count the time of our lives. The entire verse is a single relentless sentence that does not end until the fourth line of the following stanza. So long as the scene is the addict's room, almost every line ends in apparent disjunction, but turns out to be in enjambment with the following line, and adds to its pain.

and the earth, they say, swings 'round
the sun,
the days become the seasons, the
seasons the years,
and we in our ignorance swaying our
plumed and cocked bodies
while time grows crystal in the soul.
You have arisen
from your grimy couch, opened your
brilliant eyes, put sighing
aside the womb-bliss of needles, and
wavered forth.
Dawn waits, still unseen, but the richest
suns, sometimes,
spill through the sullied winter sky.
And the clear
dance of thought, grateful as a flogged
puppy, resumes
and the charmed charnel fountain-play
of poems, midwinter spring indeed!

In the preceding stanza, the music of the spheres has been represented as the choir of sun, moon, and stars "singing death's immortal sway." Only death is undying. "And the earth, they say, swings 'round the sun. . . ." That funeral music is our moments, seasons, years. And with a turn like the change of tonality after the sonnet's octave, the poem suddenly arises from its drugged sleep to sing its own mortality. The boy, himself a poet, as is suggested in the stanza's last line, has "wavered forth." The happy fitness of the words suggest at once the addict's shaky progress and the uncertain steps of the newborn spirit. What the spirit advances to is the feast of life, and a celebratory music, "charmed charnel fountain-play of poems," that is also an anthem of death. "They say," in the first line, is gratuitous as life, and echoes through the stanza: the earth's journey around the sun is no more than a wistful theory; the stuff of science is appearance, mortality.

Oh, I could speak Chinese, perceive
how doorbells work,
lead bloodless revolutions skipping
through the parks, roll
the whole dismantled creation into one
gentle poem, bouncing
like a ball
for children to throw and old men
glaze with their grateful tears.
The skulls of Kiev, Oswiecim, Songmy,
Gettysburg
will thunder underground toward the
tenpins of Jerusalem
and on the Day of Judgment rocket
upwards chanting
of the miracle that was life, that
dreamed to walk on water,
that swallowed all that was, and then
was not.

This extraordinary stanza begins with a rotten spot—the charming sketch of the sedentary poet, all thumbs, marveling perpetually at this man's art and that man's scope, himself unapt for any. Wit is faithfully doing its work of destruction in the first two lines. The poet could, for very joy, speak Chinese, which no mortal has yet mastered; "perceive," dimly, the mystery of doorbells; lead "bloodless revolutions" (black swans) "skipping"—ah, a Children's Crusade, then. Unfortunately, it makes no odds if elation translates the poet into an empyrean in which he is the selfsame adorable dumbbunny we cherish here below. He ought to keep his disclaimers to himself. These notations are trying very hard to turn "one gentle poem" to mawkishness, to infantilize "bouncing like a ball"—an image that is strategic for the five astonishing lines that end the poem with the most solemn imagery of death in life and life in death.

I would desire the reader to go through the poem again, skipping the more or less arbitrary glosses that were designed chiefly to slow down his first meeting with "To His Other Spirit." I must assume that this is his first meeting, for *The View from the Peacock's Tail* did not receive The National Book Award for poetry, nor the Pulitzer Prize, in 1972—as Rosenthal's inspired essay, *Poetry and the Common Life*, did not receive the award for criticism and belles-lettres the year before last. What were the judges thinking of? The usual things, no doubt. In any case, it is clear, isn't it, that the philosophic breadth and adequacy of "To His Other Spirit" is Shelleyan, that its vaulting rhetoric, built on the common speech, is a victory of the spirit over this slothful fourth quarter of the 20th century.

Rosenthal has written other poems of equal scope and charge—and some whose scope is infinite because they are

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pure lyrics, not bounded by propositions, and reverberate endlessly. Now, the long lines of "To His Other Spirit" bespeak the deep-chested poet; at a time when the most successful long lines are driven by the hysteria of the stand-up comic, whom we are supposed to receive as Clown and Man-of-Sorrows rolled into one, Rosenthal's powerful utterance blesses like water in a thirsty land. That the power is delicate, subtle, and infinitely unhappy in its passion, this lyric from the new collection, *She*, attests:

Once

"Mistress," I said to her
whose name is body of my desire,
"will these green days
remain with us forever?"

"Mistress," I said to her
whose name is all my thought,
"I had forgot
the very name of Death.
Desire for Her blew through me once
like the mistral."

A cold, forgotten voice replied,
"Desire blew through us once like the
mistral."

INDIGENOUS MUSIC / Nat Hentoff

In his book, *The Hero and the Blues*, Albert Murray says, "I don't think anybody has achieved a higher aesthetic synthesis of the American experience than Duke Ellington expressed in his music." The statement may sound extravagant, unless one has heard the whole Ellington canon. Then it becomes enjoyably defensible, particularly in the face of the fact that the boundaries of "high art" in this nation have not yet been officially held to include black music, whether Delta blues or sui generis Ellington compositions.

Ellington, for example, never received a Pulitzer Prize for music. In 1965, the three-man music jury for the award did nominate him for a "special" prize (sort of like a high school equivalency diploma) in recognition of "the vitality and originality of his total productivity." The jury was overruled—higher aestheticians having concluded that Duke's music was show-biz, not art.

It was both. As Albert Murray also points out, "By original design and by typical employment as well, Ellington was still an itinerant song and dance man." But that too was surely part of the American experience. As was the gleeful pragmatism with which Duke, romantic though he was by temperament, created his music.

"The fun, the challenge," Ellington once told me, "is solving problems. Take *Boy Meets Horn*. There's one note with a cocked valve on the trumpet that has that sound I wanted—E natural. The big problem was to employ that note logically and musically within the overall structure of a composition. It was something to have fun with. It has nothing to do with conquering the world. You write it tonight and play it tomorrow, and that's it." Not quite. These were not just exercises. Duke knew his importance, having rejected his rejection by those who, as he said, "take it for granted that European-based music is the only really respectable kind."

Still, Ellington enjoyed whatever official honors came his way (even if it meant playing a duet at the White House with Richard Nixon). And I expect he would have been pleased by the series of handsomely produced reissues of his work in the Smithsonian Collection (Division of Performing Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560).

Following *Duke Ellington/1938*, there is now a four-sided *Duke Ellington/1939*. Though not of the astonishing vintage of 1940-42, this was nonetheless a most rewarding Ellington year. Jimmy Blanton, the 21-year-old source of modern jazz bass, had joined the band, as had pianist-arranger Billy Strayhorn, 23, who was to become an extension of Ellington. And in the resplendent ranks were such dramatically distinctive soloists as Rex Stewart, Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, "Tricky Sam" Nanton and Lawrence Brown.

The notes are by James Patrick, director of jazz programs at the State University of New York at Buffalo—an academic recognition of jazz that Ellington might have savored a bit. (He set great store by dignity, provided no one else defined his for him.) In his essay, Patrick makes two particularly useful points, and the music here bears him out.

Patrick calls Ellington "one of our most traditional composers" in the sense that, "for all his experiments with extended forms, unusual phrase structures, and abstract composition, much of his greatness was expressed in the traditional forms of dance music, the popular song, and the blues." Two, as extraordinarily individualistic as were his sidemen, their solos "are so intimately tied to the overall orchestral concept

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of the piece that they appear not as accompanied solos in the traditional jazz sense but rather as melodic surfaces of the collective sound."

In that respect (the textural totality of an Ellington performance) he showed the way to much current exploratory jazz. Or rather, black music (a term he preferred). Of course, he showed many other directions as well, leading Miles Davis, noted for nonobeisance, to say once, "I think all the musicians in jazz should get together on one certain day and get down on their knees to thank Duke."

Among the thirty-two selections are alternate takes that have never been issued before and a special dividend, an Ellington piano solo, *Informal Blues*, released here for the first time. Among the rest are such perennial pleasures as *The Sergeant Was Shy, Country Gal*, portraits of Willie the Lion Smith and Billy Strayhorn, and two duets with Jimmy Blanton.

This wasn't all Duke created in 1939, and yet it was so much. And there were so many other years at least as full and as lastingly original. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Ever since it was first produced in Warsaw in 1920, in Yiddish, S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk* has been a success. It has been presented in Polish, Swedish, Bulgarian, French and Japanese before fascinated audiences. The Neighborhood Playhouse did it in New York in 1925 in a replica of the most memorable of all its productions, staged in Moscow by a non-Jew, Eugene Vachtangov, Stanislavsky's great disciple with the Hebrew-speaking Habima company. I saw that production in New York while it was on its world tour in 1926 and several times since. It was one of the great theatre experiences of my entire career as a playgoer.*

The Dybbuk is now being given in still another version developed by Mira Rafalowicz under the guidance of Joseph Chaikin who has staged it (Public Theatre). It can hardly fail to "work" because the play's basic material possesses universal appeal: the wonder and mystery of a fable or "legend" essential to all that is enduring in the theatre.

Its story deals with the deathlessness of love in a manner rare in any Western drama. For the lover, Chanon, a student of the cabala who has exchanged no more than a few hesitant words with his beloved Leah, dies on hearing that she has been betrothed by her father to a youth she has never seen. But at the moment of the wedding Leah speaks in the voice of the dead Chanon: she has become possessed by his spirit, the "dybbuk." A rabbinical exorcism is attempted and the girl dies. In the original text "[She] leaves her black cape and all in white goes to Chanon to the strains of the wedding march. She stands in his place and her figure blends with his." Those who truly love each other cannot be separated.

Two other strands are interwoven in the play's fabric. One of them is a condemnation of greed: Leah's father, a wealthy merchant, sought a rich bridegroom for his daughter. Above and beyond this there is the particularly Jewish conviction that what is humanly just (the love of two pure souls) is also godly. "Blessed be the true Judge."

Together with the mystic atmosphere of the story, the Vachtangov production emphasized its social aspect. The play was viewed as a kind of phantasmagoria of a past civilization, a world beautiful in its depth of feeling but condemned for its practical organization. All the props (furniture, etc.) stood askew, the characters' faces were strangely masklike as though they were phantoms of a bygone age, while the beggarly poor—crippled, hunchbacked, blind and stunted—danced at the wedding with hate-filled grotesquerie. Leah, as I remember it, did not join the "ghost" of her beloved; the exorcism killed her, for she could not live without her love.

In the Chaikin version the play (except for one added and unnecessary scene) is considerably abbreviated. What is left has been fragmented into "moments," a kind of collage. One of the moments—a woman who comes to the synagogue to pray for her dying child—is touching, while the ending—following the original text—with Leah merging with Chanon in the other world is tenderly effective.

The Vachtangov production was steeped in a chant of "far away" sound, like an echo from another sphere; in the new version most of the music is Jewish singsong, imitative of routine prayer and, when instrumental, rather banal. In the Vachtangov version we did not see the person of the dead Chanon: the dybbuk was present only through the girl's transformed voice. At the Public Theatre Chanon appears each time Leah is seized by his spirit and they speak in concert.

With all the set pieces of raw wood scenery now used to indicate different places and the generally straight or "realistic" performances, the whole Chaikin production seems much less real than Vachtangov's highly stylized and dreamlike rendition of the play. Chaikin's production is more curious than gripping. The assembled parts do not constitute a whole: they are directorial indications without organic focus. There is no moment (except the last) which matches the magic of the Tree of Knowledge in Chaikin's *The Serpent* or the Cain and Abel death struggle in that creation.

Still the play, as I have said, holds a special attraction through its original idea and even more so for those unacquainted with the scenic modes of the European (mostly Russian) theatre of the 1920s. The acting is generally good. I was especially impressed by Shami Chaikin as the heartbroken mother begging God's intervention on behalf of her ailing child; by Marcia Jean Kurtz, the bride deprived of her destined lover; by Bruce Myers as Chanon, with gestures as a kind of manual dance suggesting the twisting and turning of cabalistic lore; by Jamil Zakkai as the bride's bourgeois father. (In the Vachtangov production the image evoked by him was that of a well-heated samovar!) Also telling is Richard Bauer's vocally authoritative Rabbi and Mark Nelson is charming as the stripling terrified at the prospect of a marriage to a "stranger." In short, though I found the production as a whole emotionally meager, Ansky's dybbuk may enchant you through its penetration of Chaikin.

The very qualities which made Jason Robards so strikingly right in *The Iceman Cometh*, as Jamie in *Long Day's Journey into Night* and in *A Moon for the Misbegotten* make him inadequate (except for the final moments) in the role of Con Melody in *A Touch of the Poet* (Helen Hayes Theatre). What Robards cannot convincingly achieve is personal grandeur.

I am not sure that José Quintero as director has wholly understood the play. For while Melody is something of a fool in his Byronic swagger, his aspiration to and feeling for nobility are real. He is a dreamer, not a faker; his whole being yearns for what was sound and forever worthy in the old aristocratic ideal of the English gentry, an ideal O'Neill held in high esteem. When Con Melody, an Irishman who had risen to the position of officer in Wellington's Army, comes a cropper in his tavern near Boston in 1828, he breaks down

* Stark Young, in his *New Republic* review of Dec. 25, 1926, voiced a similar reaction.

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and abandons the image of himself as a nobleman. It is this fall from inner grace which makes him cry out "It's to hell with honor if you want to rise in the world," only to reduce himself to the state of the grubby drifters who hang around his *shebeen* cadging drinks. His American-born daughter Sara, who had previously scorned him for his haughty pretenses, now mourns the grand person he had been and weeps for him. She wants him to be as he was: "deep down that's been my pride too—that I was your daughter." The Melody without his sense of glory "wasn't anyone I ever knew or want to know."

Melody's downfall at the hands of the wealthy New England "tradesmen" is pathetic and meaningful to the play only if we discern the idealistic truth hidden beneath his boastful postures and lordly behavior. There can be no real pathos in the crackup of a pip-squeak or a phony.

To be a sound, complete person, O'Neill (like Whitman) intimates, the American must not forsake his heritage of faith in gallant (moral and spiritual) action for mere moneymaking. *A Touch of the Poet* was to be the "prologue" to the nine-play cycle which O'Neill proposed to name *A Tale of Possessors Self-Possessed*. He once said of it that he "was going on the theory that the United States instead of being the most successful country, is the greatest failure. It's the greatest failure because it was given everything, more than any other country. . . . It's main idea is that everlasting game of trying to possess your own soul by the possession of something outside of it. . . . We are the clearest example of 'For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.'" If we do not see that Melody is degrading himself at the end and making himself into the ordinary common citizen we see only the surface —the "television special"—aspect of the play, which vitiates its real value, its genuine power.

Yet the written play somehow still triumphs despite its turbid presentation. In structure, in writing (though it badly needs cutting), in the lyric characterization of Melody's wife, in the complex characterization of his daughter, *A Touch of the Poet* is one of O'Neill's most realized dramas, than which nothing better has been achieved in this country.

It is quite a trick to make a play about the fatally ill painless. That is what happens in Ronald Ribman's aptly named *Cold Storage* (Lyceum Theatre). Two men are seen sitting on a fashionable hospital's roof garden. One of them, Joseph Parmigian, a successful Armenian in the fruit and vegetable business, in cheerful resignation acknowledges that he is dying of cancer. The other, Richard Landau, a Jewish dealer in objets d'art resists the suspicion that he may be in the same case.

They do nothing but talk. Parmigian is flippant, given to oddball jokes, Landau reveals, besides worry over his present condition, a lasting wound relating to the destruction of his parental family by the Nazis. The play might be termed a "philosophic dialogue," though its persistent levity of tone disguises even that.

Its "message" is based on three propositions: (*a*) the great "point" of life is that it has no point, (*b*) that we must have the courage to die and (*c*) that life is "interesting," even funny. On that combined basis we can live with equanimity day by day.

Put that way, I can raise no objection. Such conclusions stated in a play without actual dramatic context are nothing

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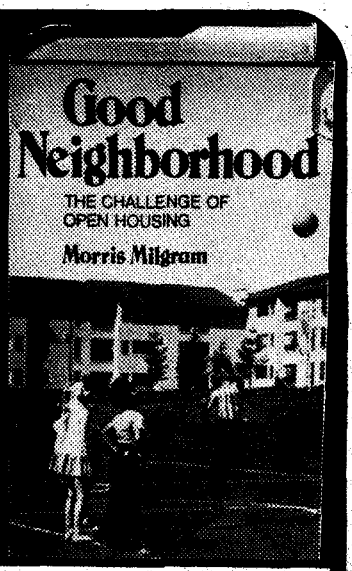

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but blather, the stuff one might hear at a bar or at a coffee klatch. Meaning in a play is not achieved by blank statements, however amusingly phrased but through a construct of situations, images and characters.

The quip which sets Landau laughing for the first time in the play is Parmigian's speaking of a nun who resembles a penguin! (No one else in the house found it funny.) *Cold Storage* is little but palaver sustained by the good nature of Martin Balsam's beefy Armenian and Len Cariou's well-suggested anguish as Landau. But the play exists in a vacuum and that it has been taken by some (reviewers among them) as a serious comedy is the only grave thing about it. □

RECORDS

DAVID HAMILTON

LEONI: *L'Oracolo.* Joan Sutherland, Ryland Davies, Tito Gobbi, Richard Van Allan. John Alldis Choir; National Philharmonic Orchestra; Richard Bonynge, cond. London OSA 12107. $15.96 (two discs).

WOLF-FERRARI: *Il Segreto di Susanna.* Maria Chiara, Bernd Weikl. Covent Garden Royal Opera Orchestra; Lamberto Gardelli, cond. London OSA 1169. $7.98.

MONTEMEZZI: *L'Amore dei tre re.* Anna Moffo, Placido Domingo, Pablo Elvira, Cesare Siepi. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Symphony Orchestra; Nello Santi, cond. RCA Red Seal ARL2 1945. $15.98 (two discs).

Let us hope that Franco Leoni's tawdry *grand guignol* will be the low point reached in current explorations of pre-World War I Italian opera. Based on a play by the American writer Chester Bailey Fernald set in San Francisco's Chinatown, *L'Oracolo* carries on the fashion of *verismo* opera (see *The Nation*, December 3, 1977) in oriental settings, earlier exemplified by Mascagni's *Iris* (1898) and of course Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904); in less than an hour it offers an opium den, two murders, a Chinese New Year procession, a kidnapping (with a child stuffed down a manhole), and a propped-up cadaver. The musical invention is thin, the instrumentation theatrical. Until 1931, as long as the resourceful singing actor Antonio Scotti was around to flesh out the improbable villain, *L'Oracolo* held the stage, but Leoni's platitudinous musical characterizations can't be made sufficiently vivid in sound alone, even by the equally resourceful Tito Gobbi. The recorded performance is capable, though the juxtaposition of Gobbi's striking verbal force and clarity with Sutherland's ever vague diction is pretty incongruous. (The fourth side of the set is occupied by Leoni's incidental music for a play by one James Bernard Fagan, about which the program notes —perhaps wisely?—tell us nothing.)

That better composers were at work during this period is clear enough from two other recent exhumations. The overture to Wolf-Ferrari's *Secret of Suzanne* has long been a pop-concert cliché; a serious listen quickly reveals it as a minor miracle of thematic economy and contrapuntal dexterity. The opera that follows is a comparably elegant piece of 18th-century pastiche, its wit slightly dulled in this somewhat undercharacterized, underpolished performance. The half-German, half-Italian Wolf-Ferrari wrote a dozen comic operas (five of them based on Goldoni plays), of which this is the slightest; recordings of some of the others would be welcome if the requisite style and ensemble skills could be mustered. And Wolf-Ferrari's single excursion into *verismo*, *The Jewels of the Madonna* (1911), is a better piece of composition than almost any other example of the genre—it ought to have been recorded long before *L'Oracolo* (the BBC broadcast a rather good performance in 1976, to celebrate the centenary of the composer's birth).

Italo Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei tre re* (1913), based on a play by Sem Benelli, is another "find" (it's been recorded before, but not well): sensitive to non-Italian developments (the unavoidable Wagner, and also Mussorgsky, Debussy and Richard Strauss), yet with a clear melodic impulse of its own. The strain of medieval sadism that crops up in Italian drama around this time is somewhat in evidence here, as it will be in Zandonai's *Francesca da Rimini* (1914, after D'Annunzio's play) and to a repulsive degree in Giordano's *La Cena delle beffe* (1924, from the Benelli play that the Barrymores presented on Broadway as *The Jest*). But here it is subordinated to the work's larger concerns of dynasty and passion, and the composition is resourceful in deploying a large and varied range of harmony and instrumentation, the shaping sure if not always subtle.

Like most operatic recordings put together from scratch in the studio (including the Wolf-Ferrari above), RCA's *Amore* is less detailed and compelling than what the same performers would probably have achieved had they first played their roles together in the theatre. Two exceptions: Siepi, who projects very strongly, and Moffo, in enough vocal difficulty that she hasn't leeway to think about projecting a character at all. Domingo offers so much élan, tonal richness, and musicianship that one is loth to complain, but this may be a case where his facility as a "quick study" is almost a liability: another tenor, who would have needed more time to learn the part, might have over that time developed a more personal interpretation. Nevertheless, the essentials of a rather imposing opera are well set forth on these discs. □

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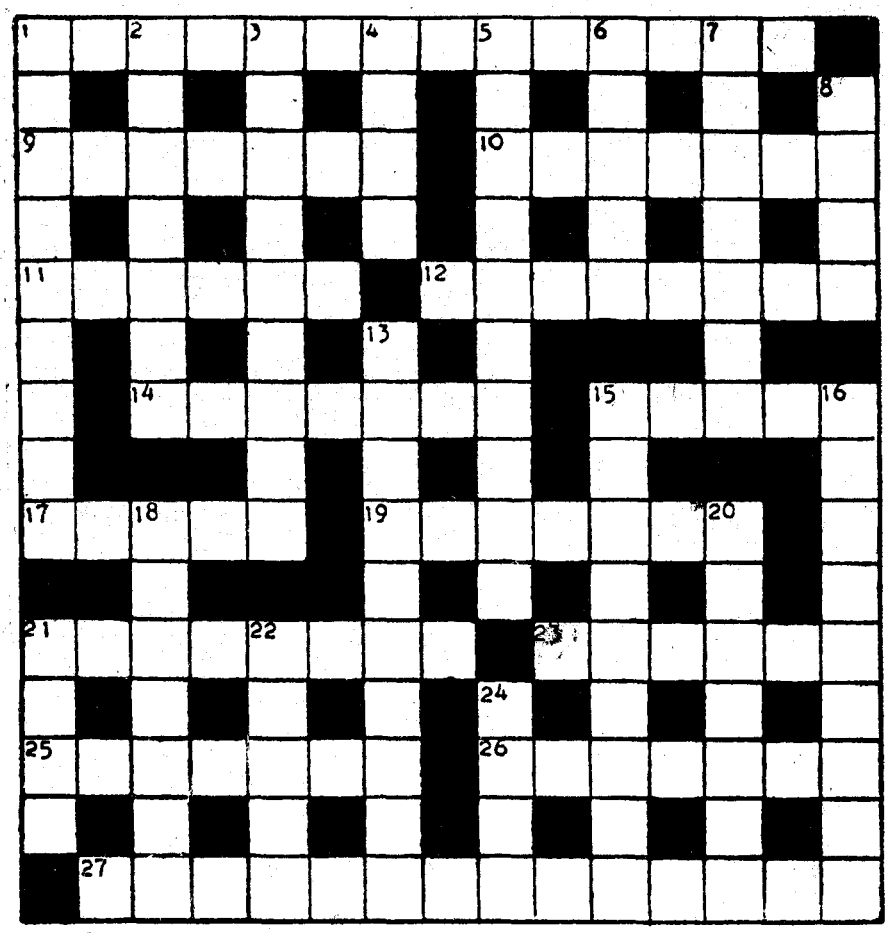

ACROSS

1 and 12 Invitation from The West, as some might think. (4,2,3,3,2,8)
9 One might hear such things to be pretty much like a sort of ice mold. (7)
10 Is their waltz famous because they glide so easily? (7)
11 Guarantee—like, positive, man! (6)
12 See 1 across
14 Less wind, less chance of your having the trick during it. (7)
15 Calls out your name, perhaps, and leaves. (5)
17 Blackmore's family seems to make a unit. (5)
19 In a strict sense, it could be written "all rite". (7)
21 With the words reversed, a festival cross this way. (8)
23 Well-known family of forgers. (6)
25 Look at what's dug out! (There might be one in a mask.) (7)
26 Does the international body have brashness and cause to fear? (7)
27 and 21 down One can't call a strike until this—it's old and 9. (5,3,4,2,4)

DOWN

1 Required with authority. (9)
2 Annoys with skin blemishes a little way up. (7)
3 Are you being attacked this way with an andiron, logically so? (5,4)
4 Principal part of the foot. (4)
5 Food container on a pigpen? One who has it can't be trusted! (10)
6 Duck found some time around dusk? Quite the contrary! (5)
7 Browning had one at night, parting at morning. (7)
8 He's good at getting set, like the man shows! (4)
13 A handout has some odor attached to it, especially for the teenager. (10)
15 Over-enthusiasm for the lighting displayed by "Piano Mary". (9)
16 They're not female dervishes, but every single one of them suggests it. (9)
18 A person's just under twelve in Bonn, by this alone. (7)
20 Not the earlier Albert, when small, sometimes seen on the football field. (7)
21 See 27 across
22 and 24 Engage in ordinary language? Pretty clever! (9)

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ACROSS: 1 Avoid the issue; 10 Assumes; 11 Phaeton; 12 Obverse; 13 English; 14 Assists; 15 Stettin; 16 and 22 down Order of the Bath; 20 Pointer; 23 High Tor; 24 Rimless; 25 Sniffle; 26 Off-base; 27 By candlelight. DOWN: 2 Vis-a-vis; 3 Immures; 4 Tasters; 5 and 20 down Express purpose; 6 Spangle; 7 Untwist; 8 Sadomasochist; 9 Enchantresses; 17 Dignify; 18 Ratafia; 19 Forfend; 21 In mufti

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